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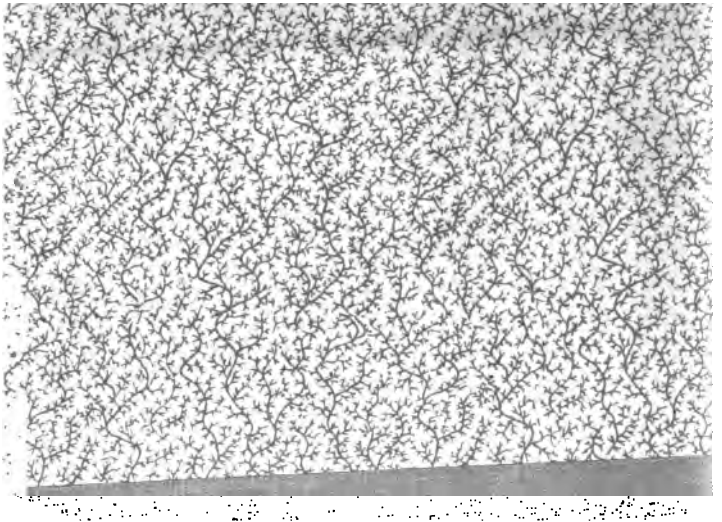
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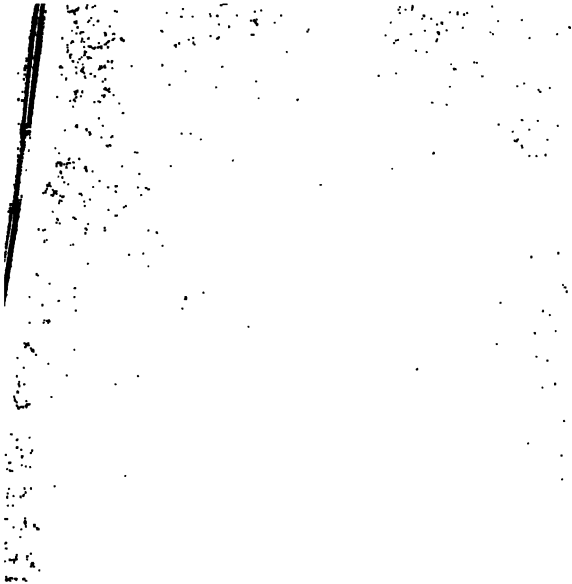
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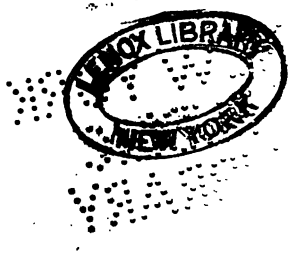
VOL. VIII.

LADY M. W. MONTAGU'S LETTERS FROM FRANCE AND ITALY.

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1819—21.


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LADY

M. W. MONTAGU'S LETTERS

FROM

FRANCE AND ITALY.

VOL. I.



LONDON, PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1820.

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LADY M. W. MONTAGU'S Letters from *France and Italy*, are now, for the first time, published *separately* for the accommodation of such readers as hitherto have only possessed her Letters written during the *Embassy to Constantinople*.

One series of letters, to her sister the countess of Mar, formed from materials of lesser interest than the resources of foreign travel, are placed at the end of the volumes, although, in point of chronology, they claim precedence before the others: the same remark may *here* be applied to her letters written in early life, which will be found at the close of the *Constantinople Letters*. By this arrangement the editor has been enabled to equalise the size of the two works, which, together, form a complete collection of her ladyship's EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

It was the intention of the editor to have prefixed to each work a portrait of her ladyship from pictures by different artists; but, upon reflection, he considered it preferable to substitute in the present work a portrait of her son EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGU, ESQ. who is but slightly connected with her letters, but whose eccentricities have scarcely escaped the recollection of the present generation.

Jan. 1820.

LETTERS

FROM

FRANCE AND ITALY.

I.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Calais, July 27, 1739.

I AM safely arrived at Calais, and found myself better on ship-board than I have been these six months; not in the least sick, though we had a very high sea, as you may imagine, since we came over in two hours and three quarters. My servants behaved very well; and Mary not in the least afraid, but said she would be drowned very willingly with my ladyship. They ask me here extravagant prices for chaises, of which there are great choice, both French and Italian: I have at last bought one for fourteen guineas, of a man whom Mr. Hall recommended to me. My things have been examined and sealed at the custom-house: they took from me a pound of snuff, but did not open my jewel boxes, which they let pass on my word, being things belonging to my dress. I set out early to-morrow.

I am very impatient to hear from you: I could not stay for the post at Dover for fear of losing the tide. I beg you would be so good as to order Mr. Kent to pack up my side-saddle, and all the tackle belonging to it, in a box to be sent with my other things: if (as I hope) I recover my health abroad so much as to ride, I can get none I shall like so well.

II.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Dijon, Aug. 18, 1739, N. S.

I AM at length arrived here very safely, and without any bad accident; and so much mended in my health, that I am surprised at it. France is so much improved, it would not be known to be the same country we passed through twenty years ago. Every thing I see speaks in praise of cardinal Fleury: the roads are all mended, and the greater part of them paved as well as the streets of Paris, planted on both sides like the roads in Holland: and such good care taken against robbers, that you may cross the country with your purse in your hand: but as to travelling *incognita*, I may as well walk *incognita* in the Pall-Mall. There is not any town in France where there are not English, Scotch, or Irish families established; and I have met with people that have seen me (though often such as I do not remember to have seen) in every town I have passed through; and I think the farther I go, the more *acquaintance I meet*. Here are in this town no

less than sixteen English families of fashion. Lord Mansel lodges in the house with me, and a daughter of lord Bathurst's (Mrs. Whitshed) is in the same street. The duke of Rutland is gone from hence some time ago, as lady Peterborough told me at St. Omer's; which was one reason that determined me to come here, thinking to be quiet; but I find it impossible, and that will make me leave the place, after the return of this post. The French are more changed than their roads; instead of pale, yellow faces, wrapped up in blankets, as we saw them, the villages are all filled with fresh-coloured lusty peasants in good clothes and clean linen. It is incredible what an air of plenty and content is over the whole country. I hope to hear as soon as possible, that you are in good health.

III.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Turin, Sept. 10, 1739.

I AM now, thank God, happily past the Alps. I believe I wrote to you, that I had met English of my acquaintance in every town in France. This fortune continued to the last; for at Pont Beauvoisin I met lord Carlisle, who was in the inn when I arrived, and immediately came to offer me his room, his cook to dress my supper (he himself having supped before I came in), and all sorts of civility. We passed the evening together, and had a great deal of discourse. He said he liked Rome so well, that he should not have left it so soon, but on the

account of lord Morpeth, who was so ill there, that he was not yet recovered, and now carried in a litter. His distemper has been the bloody flux, which returned upon him in the mountains with so much violence, they had been kept three weeks at a miserable village; he is still so weak that I did not see him. My lord Carlisle* told me that next to Rome the best place to stay in Italy is, without contradiction, Venice: that the impertinence of the little sovereigns in other countries is intolerable. I have no objection to his advice, but the fear of the air not agreeing with me, though my journey has now so far established my health, that I have lost all my bad symptoms, and am ready to think I could even bear the damps of London. I will therefore venture to try, and if I find Venice too cold or moist (which I am more afraid of), I can remove very easily; though I resolve against Rome, on an account which you may guess. My lord Carlisle said, he thought me in the right; that it is very hard to avoid meeting a certain person; and there are so many little dirty spies that write any lie which comes in their heads, that doing it may be dangerous. I have received a letter from lady Pomfret, that she is leaving Vienna, and intends for Venice, which is another inducement to me to go there; but the chief is the hopes of living as quietly and as privately as I please, which hitherto I have found impossible. The English resident here, Mr. Villette, &c. came to wait on me the very night of my arrival, to my great surprise. I found the intelligence came from

* Henry Howard, earl of Carlisle, died in 1758, and his *son Charles, lord Morpeth,* in August, 1741.

the king of Sardinia's officers, who were at Pont Voisin, and had learnt my name from lord Carlisle's servants. I have been obliged to excuse my going to court, as having no court dress, and saying that I intended to leave the town in a few days. However, I have not been able to avoid the visits that have been made to me.

IV.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, Sept. 25, 1739.

I AM at length happily arrived here, I thank God; I wish it had been my original plan, which would have saved me some money and fatigue; though I have not much reason to regret the last, since I am convinced it has greatly contributed to the restoration of my health. I met nothing disagreeable on my journey but too much company. I find (contrary to the rest of the world) I did not think myself so considerable as I am; for I verily believe, if one of the Pyramids of Egypt had travelled, it could not have been more followed; and if I had received all the visits that have been intended me, I should have stopped at least two years in every town I came through. I liked Milan so well, that if I had not desired all my letters to be directed hither, I think I should have been tempted to stay there. One of the pleasures I found there was the Borromean library, where all strangers have free access; and not only so, but liberty, on giving a note for it, to

take any printed book home with them. I saw several curious manuscripts there; and as a proof of my recovery, I went up to the very top of the dome of the great church without any assistance. I am now in a lodging on the great canal. Lady Pomfret* is not yet arrived, but I expect her very soon; and if the air does not disagree with me, I intend seeing the Carnival here. I hope your health continues, and that I shall hear from you very soon.

V.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, Oct. 14, 1739.

I FIND myself very well here. I am visited by the most considerable people of the town, and all the foreign ministers, who have most of them made entertainments for me. I dined yesterday at the Spanish ambassador's, who even surpassed the French in magnificence. He let me in at the hall-door, and the lady met me at the stair-head, to conduct me through the long apartment; in short, they could not have shown me more honours, if I had been an ambassadress. She desired me to think myself *patrona del casa*, and offered me all

* Henrietta Louisa, daughter and heir of the second lord Jefferies, wife of Thomas earl of Pomfret. She resided chiefly at Rome, where she wrote the Life of Vandyck. A part of the collection of marbles made by Thomas earl of Arundel, having been purchased by William earl of Pomfret, was given by her to the university of Oxford, in 1758.

the services in her power, to wait on me when I pleased, &c. They have the finest palace in Venice. What is very convenient, I hear it is not at all expected that I should make any dinners, it not being the fashion for any body to do it here, but the foreign ministers; and I find I can live here very genteelly on my allowance. I have already a very agreeable general acquaintance; though when I came, here was no one I had ever seen in my life, but the cavaliere Grimani and the abbé Conti. I must do them the justice to say they have taken pains to be obliging to me. The procurator brought his niece (who is at the head of his family) to wait on me; and they invited me to reside with them at their palace on the Brent, but I did not think it proper to accept of it. He also introduced to me the signora Pisani Mocenigo, who is the most considerable lady here. The nuncio is particularly civil to me; he has been several times to see me, and has offered me the use of his box at the opera. I have many others at my service, and in short it is impossible for a stranger to be better received than I am. Here are no English, except a Mr. Bertie and his governor, who arrived two days ago, and who intend but a short stay.

I hope you are in good health, and that I shall hear of it before you can receive this letter.

VI.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, Dec. 25, 1739, O. S.

I RECEIVED yours yesterday, dated Dec. 7. I find my health very well here, notwithstanding the cold, which is very sharp, but the sun shines as clear as at midsummer. I am treated here with more distinction than I could possibly expect. I went to see the ceremony of high mass celebrated by the doge, on Christmas eve. He appointed a gallery for me and the prince of Wolfembatch, where no other person was admitted but those of our company. A greater compliment could not have been paid me if I had been a sovereign princess. The doge's niece (he having no lady) met me at the palace gate, and led me through the palace to the church of St. Mark, where the ceremony was performed in the pomp you know, and we were not obliged to any act of adoration. The electoral prince of Saxony is here in public, and makes a prodigious expense. His governor is count Wackerbart, son to that madame Wackerbart with whom I was so intimate at Vienna; on which account he shows me particular civilities, and obliges his pupil to do the same. I was last night at an entertainment made for him by the signora Pisani Mocenigo, which was one of the finest I ever saw, and he desired me to sit next to him in a great chair: in short I have all the reason *that can be*, to be satisfied with my treatment in

this town; and I am glad I met lord Carlisle, who directed me hither.

I have so little correspondence at London, I should be pleased to hear from you whatever happens among my acquaintance. I am sorry for Mr. Pelham's misfortune;* though it is long since, that I have looked on the hopes of continuing a family as one of the vainest of mortal prospects.

> Though Solomon, with a thousand wives,
> To get a wise successor strives;
> But one, and he a fool, survives.

The procurator of St. Mark has desired his compliments to you whenever I write.

VII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, Jan. 25, 1739—40.

I WROTE to you last post; but as I do not know whether I was particular enough in answering all the questions you asked me, I add the following account, which I do not wonder will surprise you, since both the procurator Grimani and the abbé Conti tell me often, that these last twenty years have so far changed the customs of Venice, that they hardly know it for the same country. Here are several foreign ladies of quality, I mean Ger-

* The death of his two sons on two following days, Nov. 27, 28, 1739.

mans, and from other parts of Italy; but not one Frenchwoman. They are all well received by the *gentil donnas*, who make a vanity in introducing them to the assemblies and their public diversions, though all those ladies, as well as myself, go frequently to the princess of Campo Florida's (the Spanish ambassadress') assembly. She is in a very particular manner obliging to me, and is, I really think, one of the best sort of women I ever knew. The Neapolitan (though he has been here some months) makes his public entry to-day, which I am to go see about an hour hence. He gives a great entertainment to-night, where all the noble Venetians of both sexes will be in masque. I am engaged to go with the signora Justiniani Granedigo, who is one of the first ladies here. The prince of Saxony has invited me to come into his box at the opera; but I have not yet accepted of it, he having always the four ladies with him that are wives to the four senators deputed to do the honours of Venice; and I am afraid they should think I interfere with them in the honour of his conversation, which they are very fond of, and have behaved very coldly to some other noble Venetian ladies that have taken the liberty of his box. I will be directed in this (as I am in all public matters) by the procurator Grimani. My letter is shortened by the arrival of the signora.

VIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, March 29, 1740.

THE letters Mr. Waters mentions from —— were pretty much in the usual style; he desires to leave the town where he now is, because he says there is no temptation to riot, and he would show how able he is to resist it: I answer him this post, and shall endeavour to show him mildly the necessity of being easy in his present situation. Now, lord Granby* leaves this place to-morrow, to set out for Constantinople; the prince of Saxony stays till the second of May; in the mean time there are entertainments given him almost every day of one sort or other, and a Regatta preparing, which is expected by all strangers with great impatience. He went to see the arsenal three days ago, waited on by a numerous nobility of both sexes; the Bucentaur was adorned and launched, a magnificent collation given, and we sailed a little way in it: I was in company with the signora Justiniani Granedigo, and signora Marina Crizzo. As you have been at Venice, there is no occasion of describing those things to you. There were two cannons founded in his presence, and a galley built and launched in an hour's time. Last night there was a concert of

* John Manners, the heroic marquis of Granby, was born in 1720. Commander in chief in Germany, 1762. Died 1770.

voices and instruments at the Hospital of the Incurabili, where there were two girls that, in the opinion of all people, excel either Faustina or Cuzzoni, but you know they are never permitted to sing on any theatre.

Lord Fitzwilliam* is expected in this town to-night, on his return to England, as I am told. The prince's behaviour is very obliging to all, and in no part of it liable to censure, though I think there is nothing to be said in praise of his genius; and I suppose you know he has been lame from his birth, and is carried about in a chair, though a beautiful person from the waist upwards: it is said his family design him for the church, he having four brothers who are fine children. The weather is now very fine; we have had none of the canals frozen in the coldest part of the winter, but the mountains are still covered with snow.

Your last letters have said nothing of my baggage. If there is danger of its being taken by the privateers, I had rather it staid in England, and I would go into the southern part of France, where it might be conveyed to me without hazard, than risk the loss of it. If there is a probability of a rupture with France, I can go to Avignon.

* He died 1756.

IX.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, April 19, 1740, N. S.

I RECEIVED yours of January 1 but yesterday; for which reason I think it useless to answer it at present, but if I find any occasion, shall not fail to follow your orders. Lord Granby is set out on his journey for Constantinople. Lord Fitzwilliam arrived here three days ago: he came to see me the next day, as all the English do, who are much surprised at the civilities and the familiarity with which I am received by the noble ladies. Every body tells me it is what never was done but to myself; and I own I have a little vanity in it, because the French ambassador told me when I first came, that though the procurator Grimani might persuade them to visit me, he defied me to enter into any sort of intimacy with them: instead of which they call me out almost every day on some diversion or other, and are desirous to have me in all their parties of pleasure. I am invited to-morrow to the Foscarini to dinner, which is to be followed by a concert and a ball, where I shall be the only stranger, though here are at present a great number come to see the Regatta, which is fixed for the 29th of this month, N. S. I shall see it at the procurator Grimani's, where there will be a great entertainment that day. My own house is very well situated to see it, being on the Grand Canal; but I would not refuse him and his niece, since

they seem desirous of my company, and I shall oblige some other ladies with my windows. They are hired at a great rate to see the show. I suppose you know the nature of it; but if it will be any amusement, I will send you a particular description.

X.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, June 1, 1740.

I WROTE you a long letter yesterday, which I sent by a private hand, who will see it safely delivered. It is impossible to be better treated, I may even say more courted, than I am here. I am very glad of your good fortune at London. You may remember, I have always told you it is in your power to make the first figure in the House of Commons. As to the bill, I perfectly remember the paying of it; which you may easily believe when you inquire, that all auction bills are paid at farthest within eight days after the sale: the date of this is March 1, and I did not leave London till July 25; and in that time have been at many other auctions, particularly lord Halifax's, which was a short time before my journey. This is not the first of Cock's* mistakes; he is famous for making them, which are (he says) the fault of his servants. You seem to mention the Regatta in a manner as if you would be pleased with a description of it. It is a race of

* *A celebrated auctioneer—the Christie of the day.*

boats: they are accompanied by vessels which they call *piotes* or *bichones*, that have a mind to display their magnificence; they are a sort of machines adorned with all that sculpture and gilding can do to make a shining appearance. Several of them cost one thousand pounds sterling, and I believe none less than five hundred; they are rowed by gondoliers dressed in rich habits, suitable to what they represent. There were enough of them to look like a little fleet, and I own I never saw a finer sight. It would be too long to describe every one in particular, I shall only name the principal: The signora Pisani Mocenigo's represented the Chariot of the Night, drawn by four sea-horses, and showing the rising of the moon, accompanied with stars, the statues on each side representing the hours to the number of twenty-four, rowed by gondoliers in rich liveries, which were changed three times, all of equal richness, and the decorations changed also to the dawn of Aurora and the mid-day sun, the statues being new dressed every time, the first in green, the second time red, and the last blue, all equally laced with silver, there being three races. Signor Soranto represented the kingdom of Poland, with all the provinces and rivers in that dominion, with a concert of the best instrumental music in rich Polish habits; the painting and gilding were exquisite in their kinds. Signor Contarini's *piote* showed the liberal arts; Apollo was seated on the stern upon mount Parnassus, Pegasus behind, and the Muses seated round him: opposite was a figure representing Painting, with Fame blowing her trumpet; and on each side Sculpture and Music in their proper dresses. The procurator

Foscarini's was the chariot of Flora guided by Cupids, and adorned with all sorts of flowers, rose-trees, &c. Signor Julio Contarini's represented the triumphs of Valour; Victory was on the stern, and all the ornaments warlike trophies of every kind. Signor Correri's was the Adriatic sea receiving into her arms the Hope of Saxony. Signor Alvisio Mocenigo's was the garden of Hesperides; the whole fable was represented by different statues. Signor Querini had the chariot of Venus drawn by doves, so well done, they seemed ready to fly upon the water; the Loves and Graces attended her. Signor Paul Doria had the chariot of Diana, who appeared hunting in a large wood; the trees, hounds, stag, and nymphs, all done naturally: the gondoliers dressed like peasants attending the chase; and Endymion, lying under a large tree, gazing on the goddess. Signor Angelo Labbia represented Poland crowning Saxony, waited on by the Virtues and subject Provinces. Signor Angelo Molino was Neptune waited on by the Rivers. Signor Vicenzo Morosini's piote showed the triumphs of Peace; Discord being chained at her feet, and she, surrounded with the Pleasures, &c.

I believe you are already weary of this description, which can give you but a very imperfect idea of the show; but I must say one word of the *bichonis*, which are less vessels, quite open, some representing gardens, others apartments, all the oars being gilt either with gold or silver, and the gondoliers' liveries either velvet or rich silk, with a profusion of lace, fringe, and embroidery. I saw this show at the procurator Grimani's house, which was near the place where the prizes were delivered:

there was a great assembly invited on the same occasion, which were all nobly entertained. I can get no better ink here, though I have tried several times, and it is a great vexation to me to want it.

XI.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Florence, Aug. 11, 1740.

THIS is a very fine town, and I am much amused with visiting the gallery, which I do not doubt you remember too well to need any description of. Lord and lady Pomfret take pains to make the place agreeable to me, and I have been visited by the greatest part of the people of quality. Here is an opera which I have heard twice, but it is not so fine either for voices or decorations as that at Venice. I am very willing to be at Leghorn when my things arrive, which I fear will hinder my visiting Rome this season, except they come sooner than is generally expected. If I could go from thence by sea to Naples with safety, I should prefer it to a land journey, which I am told is very difficult; and that it is impossible I should stay there long, the people being entirely unsociable. I do not desire much company, but would not confine myself to a place where I could see none. I have written to your daughter, directed to Scotland, this post.

XII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Rome, October 2

I ARRIVED here in good health three days
this is the first post-day. I have taken a
for a month, which is (as they tell me) bu
time to take a view of all the antiquities,
are to be seen. From hence I purpose to
for Naples. I am told by every body tha
not find it agreeable to reside in. I exp
Pomfret here in a few days. It is summ
and I left winter at Florence; the snow
begun to fall on the mountains. I shall
see the new ceremony of the Pope's* taki
sion of the Vatican, which is said to be
that is ever performed at Rome. I ha
to send from hence. If you would hav
to any particular point, I beg you will l
it, and I will give you the best inform
able.

* Benedict XIV.

XIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Rome, Nov. 1, 1740, N.S.

I HAVE now been here a week, and am very well diverted with viewing the fine buildings, paintings, and antiquities. I have neither made nor received one visit, nor sent word to any body of my arrival, on purpose to avoid interruptions of that sort. The weather is so fine that I walk every evening in a different beautiful garden; and I own I am charmed with what I see of this town, though there yet remains a great deal more to be seen. I purpose making a stay of a month, which shall be entirely taken up in that employment, and then I will remove to Naples, to avoid, if possible, feeling the winter. I do not trouble you with any descriptions, since you have been here, and I suppose very well remember every thing that is worth remembering; but (as I mentioned in my last) if you would have me speak to any particular point, I will give you the best information in my power. Direct your next letter to Monsieur Belloni, banquier, à Rome. He will take care to deliver it to me, either here or at Naples. Letters are very apt to miscarry, especially those to this place.

XIV.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Rome, Nov. 12, 1740.

ILL set out for Naples on next Friday: I do loubt liking the situation, but by all the in-ation I can get, it will be every way improper ny residence; and I purpose no longer stay : than is necessary to see what is curious. I been very diligent in viewing every thing here; ng no acquaintance that I might have no inter-on. Here is a statue of Antinous lately found, h is said to be equal to any in Rome, and is to old; perhaps the duke of Bedford might be to hear of it. I do not hear of one valuable re that is to be purchased. It has been this week as dark and rainy as ever I saw it in and. Your letter of September 23 came to me this day. I perceive letters are stopped and ed more carefully than ever, which hinders riting any of the reports I hear; some of them ery extraordinary. The emperor's ambassador has taken the character of the queen of Bohe-, and, as such, presented his credentials, h have been received.

XV.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Naples, Nov. 23, N. S. 1740.

I ARRIVED here last night, after a very disagreeable journey: I would not in my last give you any account of the present state of Rome, knowing all letters are opened there; but I cannot help mentioning what is more curious than all the antiquities, which is, that there is literally no money in the whole town, where they follow Mr. Law's scheme, and live wholly upon paper.

Belloni, who is the greatest banker not only of Rome, but all Italy, furnished me with fifty sequins, which he solemnly swore was all the money he had in the house. They go to market with paper, pay the lodgings with paper, and in short, there is no specie to be seen, which raises the price of every thing to the utmost extravagance, nobody knowing what to ask for their goods. It is said the present pope * (who has a very good character) has declared he will endeavour a remedy, though it is very difficult to find one. He was bred a lawyer, and has passed the greatest part of his life in that profession; and is so sensible of the misery of the state, that he is reported to have said, that he never thought himself in want, till his elevation. He has no relations that he takes any notice of; but the country belonging to him, which I have passed,

* Benedict XIV.

is almost uninhabited, and in a poverty beyond any thing I ever saw. The kingdom of Naples appears gay and flourishing; and the town so crowded with people, that I have with great difficulty got a very sorry lodging.

XVI.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Naples, Dec. 6, 1740.

I HEARD last night the good news of the arrival of the ship on which my things are loaded at Leghorn: it would be easy to have them conveyed hither. I like the climate extremely, which is now so soft, that I am actually sitting without any want of a fire. I do not find the people so savage as they were represented to me. I have received visits from several of the principal ladies; and I think I could meet with as much company here as I desire; but here is one article both disagreeable and incommodious, which is the grandeur of the equipages. Two coaches, two running footmen, four other footmen, a gentleman usher, and two pages, are as necessary here as the attendance of a single servant is at London. All the Spanish customs are observed very rigorously. I could content myself with all of them except this: but I see plainly from my own observation as well as intelligence, that it is not to be dispensed with, which I am heartily vexed at.

The affairs of Europe are now so uncertain, that *it appears* reasonable to me to wait a little, before I

fix my residence, that I may not find myself in the theatre of war, which is threatened on all sides. I hope you have the continuation of your health; mine is very well established at present. The town lately discovered is at Portici, about three miles from this place. Since the first discovery, no care has been taken, and the ground fallen in, so that the present passage to it is, as I am told by every body, extremely dangerous, and for some time, nobody ventures into it. I have been assured by some English gentlemen, who were let down into it last year, that the whole account given in the newspapers is literally true. Probably great curiosities might be found there; but there has been no expense made, either by propping the ground or clearing a way into it; and as the earth falls in daily, it will possibly be soon stopped up, as it was before. I wrote to you last post, a particular account of my reasons for not choosing my residence here, though the air is very agreeable to me, and I see I could have as much company as I desire; but I am persuaded the climate is much changed since you knew it. The weather is now very moist and misty, and has been so for a long time; however, it is much softer than in any other place I know. I desire you would direct to monsieur Belloni, banker, at Rome: he will forward your letters wherever I am; the present uncertain situation of affairs all over Europe makes every correspondence precarious.

XVII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Rome, Jan. 13, 1740—1, N. S.

I RETURNED hither last night, after six weeks' stay at Naples; great part of that time was vainly taken up in endeavouring to satisfy your curiosity and my own, in relation to the late discovered town of Herculaneum. I waited eight days in hopes of permission to see the pictures and other rarities taken from thence, which are preserved in the king's palace at Portici; but I found it was to no purpose, his majesty keeping the key in his own cabinet, which he would not part with, though the prince de Zathia (who is one of his favourites) I believe very sincerely tried his interest to obtain it for me. He is son to the Spanish ambassador I knew at Venice, and both he and his lady loaded me with civilities at Naples. The court in general is more barbarous than any of the ancient Goths. One proof of it, among many others, was melting down a beautiful copper statue of a vestal found in this new ruin, to make medallions for the late solemn christening. The whole court follow the Spanish customs and politics. I could say a good deal on this subject if I thought my letter would come safe to your hands; the apprehension it may not, hinders my answering another inquiry you make, concerning a family here, of which indeed I can say little, avoiding all commerce *with those* that frequent it. Here are some young

English travellers; among them lord Strafford* behaves himself really very modestly and genteelly, and has lost the pertness he acquired in his mother's assembly. Lord Lincoln appears to have spirit and sense, and professes great abhorrence of all measures destructive to the liberty of his country. I do not know how far the young men may be corrupted on their return, but the majority of those I have seen have seemed strongly in the same sentiment. Lady Newburgh's eldest daughter, whom I believe you may have seen at lord Westmoreland's, is married to count Mahony, who is in great figure at Naples: she was extremely obliging to me; they made a fine entertainment for me, carried me to the opera, and were civil to me to the utmost of their power. If you should happen to see Mrs. Bulkely, I wish you would make her some compliment upon it. I received this day yours of the 20th and 28th of November.

* William Wentworth, the fourth earl of Strafford, married lady Anne, second daughter of John duke of Argyle, sister of lady Mary Coke and lady Betty Mackenzie. He built Wentworth castle, in Yorkshire, and was eminently skilled in architecture and vertù. He enjoyed an intimate friendship with the last lord Orford, in the fifth volume of whose works his correspondence is published from 1756 to 1790.

XVIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Leghorn, Feb. 25, 1740—1, N. S.

I ARRIVED here last night, and have received this morning the bill of seven hundred and five dollars, odd money.

I shall be a little more particular in my accounts from hence than I durst be from Rome, where all the letters are opened and often stopped. I hope you had mine, relating to the antiquities in Naples. I shall now say something of the court of Rome. The first minister, cardinal Valenti, has one of the best characters I ever heard of, though of no great birth, and has made his fortune by an attachment to the duchess of Salviati. The present pope is very much beloved, and seems desirous to ease the people, and deliver them out of the miserable poverty they are reduced to. I will send you the history of his elevation, as I had it from a very good hand, if it will be any amusement to you. I never saw the chevalier during my whole stay at Rome. I saw his two sons at a public ball in masque; they were very richly adorned with jewels. The eldest seems thoughtless enough, and is really not unlike Mr. Lyttleton* in his shape and air. The youngest is very well made, dances finely, and has an ingenuous countenance; he is but fourteen years of age. The family live very splendidly, yet pay every

* George Lord Lyttleton.

body, and (wherever they get it) are certainly in no want of money. I heard at Rome the truly tragical history of the princess Sobeiski, which is very different from what was said at London. The pope, Clement the Twelfth, was commonly supposed her lover, and she used to go about publicly in his state coach to the great scandal of the people. Her husband's mistress spirited him up to resent it, so far that he left Rome upon it, and she retired to a convent, where she destroyed herself. The English travellers at Rome behave in general very discreetly. I have reason to speak well of them, since they were all exceedingly obliging to me. It may sound a little vain to say it, but they really paid a regular court to me, as if I had been their queen, and their governors told me, that the desire of my approbation had a very great influence on their conduct. While I staid there was neither gaming nor any sort of extravagance. I used to preach to them very freely, and they all thanked me for it. I shall stay some time in this town, where I expect lady Pomfret. I think I have answered every particular you seemed curious about. If there be any other point you would have me speak of, I will be as exact as I can.

XIX.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Turin, April 11, 1741.

I TAKE this opportunity of writing to you on many subjects in a freer manner than I durst do by the

post, knowing that all letters are opened both here and in other places, which occasions them to be often lost, besides other inconveniences that may happen. The English politics are the general jest of all the nations I have passed through; and even those who profit by our folly cannot help laughing at our notorious blunders; though they are all persuaded that the minister does not act from weakness but corruption, and that the Spanish gold influences his measures. I had a long discourse with count Mahony on this subject, who said, very freely, that half the ships sent to the coast of Naples, that have lain idle in our ports last summer, would have frightened the queen of Spain into a submission to whatever terms we thought proper to impose. The people, who are loaded with taxes, hate the Spanish government, of which I had daily proofs, hearing them curse the English for bringing their king to them, whenever they saw any of our nation: but I am not much surprised at the ignorance of our ministers, after seeing what creatures they employ to send them intelligence. Except Mr. Villette, at this court, there is not one that has common sense: I say this without prejudice, all of them having been as civil and serviceable to me as they could. I was told at Rome, and convinced of it by circumstances, that there have been great endeavours to raise up a sham plot: the person who told it me was an English antiquarian, who said he had been offered any money to send accusations. The truth is he had carried a letter, written by Mr. Mann,* from Florence to that purpose to him,

* Sir Horace Mann.

which he showed in the English palace; however, I believe he is a spy, and made use of that stratagem to gain credit. This court makes great preparations for war: the king is certainly no bright genius, but has great natural humanity: his minister, who has absolute power, is generally allowed to have sense; as a proof of it, he is not hated as the generality of ministers are. I have seen neither of them, not going to court, because I will not be at the trouble and expense of the dress, which is the same as at Vienna. I sent my excuse by Mr. Villette, as I hear is commonly practised by ladies that are only passengers. I have had a great number of visitors; the nobility piquing themselves on civility to strangers. The weather is still exceedingly cold, and I do not intend to move till I have the prospect of a pleasant journey.

XX.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Genoa, July 15, 1741.

It is so long since I have heard from you, that though I hope your silence is occasioned by your being in the country, yet I cannot help being very uneasy, and in some apprehension that you are indisposed. I wrote you word, some time ago, that I have taken a house here for the remainder of the summer, and desired you would direct, *recommandé à monsieur Birtles, consul de S. M. Britannique.* I saw in the last newspapers (which he sends me) the death of lord Orford. I am vexed at it, for the

reasons you know, and recollect what I have often heard you say, that it is impossible to judge what is best for ourselves. I received yesterday the bill for ——, for which I return you thanks. If I wrote you all the political stories I hear, I should have a great deal to say. A great part is not true, and what I think so I dare not mention, in consideration of the various hands this paper must pass through before it reaches you. Lord Lincoln* and Mr. Walpole† (youngest son to sir Robert) left this place two days ago; they visited me during their short stay; they are gone to Marseilles, and design passing some months in the south of France.——I have had a particular account of lord Orford's death ‡ from a very good hand, which he advanced by choice, refusing all remedies till it was too late to make use of them. There was a will found, dated 1728, in which he gave every thing to my lady; which has affected her very much. Notwithstanding the many reasons she had to complain of him, I always thought there was more weakness than dishonesty in his actions, and is a confirmation of the truth of that maxim of M. Rochefoucault, *un sot n'a pas assez d' étoffe pour être honnête homme.*

* Henry Clinton, earl of Lincoln, married Catharine, daughter of Henry Pelham, and was afterward duke of Newcastle.

† Honourable Horace Walpole, the last earl of Orford, then on his travels.

‡ Robert, the second earl of Orford, died in June, 1741.

XXI.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Genoa, Aug. 25, 1741, N. S.

I RECEIVED yours of the 27th July this morning. I had that of March 19, which I answered very particularly the following post, with many thanks for the increase of my allowance. It appears to me that the letters I wrote between the 11th of April and the 31st of May were lost, which I am not surprised at. I was then at Turin, and that court in a very great confusion, and extremely jealous of me, thinking I came to examine their conduct. I have some proof of this, which I do not repeat, lest this should be stopped also.

The manners of Italy are so much changed since we were here last, the alteration is scarcely credible. They say it has been by the last war. The French, being masters, introduced all their customs, which were eagerly embraced by the ladies, and I believe will never be laid aside; yet the different governments make different manners in every state. You know, though the republic is not rich, here are many private families vastly so, and live at a great superfluous expense: all the people of the first quality keep coaches as fine as the Speaker's, and some of them two or three, though the streets are too narrow to use them in the town; but they take the air in them, and their chairs carry them to the gates. The liveries are all plain: gold or silver being forbidden to be worn within the walls, the

habits are all obliged to be black, but they wear exceedingly fine lace and linen; and in their country-houses, which are generally in the fauxbourg, they dress very richly, and have extremely fine jewels. Here is nothing cheap but houses. A palace fit for a prince may be hired for fifty pounds per annum: I mean unfurnished. All games of chance are strictly prohibited, and it seems to me the only law they do not try to evade: they play at quadrille, picquet, &c. but not high. Here are no regular public assemblies. I have been visited by all of the first rank and invited to several fine dinners, particularly to the wedding of one of the house of Spinola, where there were ninety-six sat down to table, and I think the entertainment one of the finest I ever saw. There was the night following a ball and supper for the same company, with the same profusion. They tell me that all their great marriages are kept in the same public manner. Nobody keeps more than two horses, all their journeys being post; the expense of them, including the coachman, is (I am told) fifty pounds per annum. A chair is very nearly as much; I give eighteen francs a week for mine. The senators can converse with no strangers during the time of their magistracy, which lasts two years. The number of servants is regulated, and almost every lady has the same, which is two footmen, a gentleman usher, and a page, who follow her chair.

XXII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Geneva, Oct. 12, 1741.

I ARRIVED here last night, where I find every thing quite different from what it was represented to me: it is not the first time it has so happened to me on my travels. Every thing is as dear as it is at London. It is true, as all equipages are forbidden, that expense is entirely retrenched. I have been visited this morning by some of the chiefs of the town, who seem extremely good sort of people, which is their general character; very desirous of attracting strangers to inhabit with them, and consequently very officious in all they imagine can please them. The way of living is absolutely the reverse of that in Italy. Here is no show, and a great deal of eating: there is all the magnificence imaginable, and no dinners but on particular occasions; yet the difference of the prices renders the total expense very nearly equal. As I am not yet determined whether I shall make any considerable stay, I desire not to have the money you intended me, till I ask for it. If you have any curiosity for the present condition of any of the states of Italy, I believe I can give you a truer account than perhaps any other traveller can do, having always had the good fortune of a sort of intimacy with the first persons in the governments where I resided, and they not

guarding themselves against the observations of a woman, as they would have done from those of a man.

XXIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Geneva, Nov. 5, 1741, N. S.

I HAVE been here a month: I have wrote to you three times without hearing from you, and cannot help being uneasy at your silence. I think this air does not agree with my health. I have had a return of many complaints from which I had an entire cessation during my stay in Italy, which makes me incline to return thither, though a winter journey over the Alps is very disagreeable. The people here are very well to be liked, and this little republic has an air of the simplicity of old Rome in its earliest age. The magistrates toil with their own hands, and their wives literally dress their dinners against their return from their little senate. Yet without dress or equipage it is as dear living here for a stranger, as in places where one is obliged to both, from the price of all sort of provisions, which they are forced to buy from their neighbours, having almost no land of their own. I am very impatient to hear from you. Here are many reports concerning the English affairs, which I am sometimes splenetic enough to give credit to.

XXIV.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Chamberry, Nov. 30, 1741, N. S.

I RECEIVED this morning yours of October 26, which has taken me out of the uneasiness of fearing for your health. I suppose you know before this, the Spaniards are landed at different ports in Italy, &c. When I received early information of the design, I had the charity to mention it to the English consul (without naming my informer); he laughed, and answered it was impossible. This may serve for a small specimen of the general good intelligence our wise ministry have of all foreign affairs. If you were acquainted with the people whom they employ, you would not be surprised at it. Except Mr. Villette at Turin (who is a very reasonable man), there is not one of them who knows any thing more of the country they inhabit, than that they eat and sleep in it. I have wrote you word that I left Geneva on the sharpness of the air, which much disagreed with me. I find myself better here, though the weather is very cold at present. Yet this situation is not subject to those terrible winds which reign at Geneva. I dare write you no news, though I hear a great deal. Direct to me at Chamberry *en Savoye, par Paris.*

XXV.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Chamberry, Dec. 22, 1741.

I HAVE not heard from you since I came to this place; but I think it very possible the letters may have miscarried: at this crisis all are suspected and opened, and consequently often lost. I send this by way of Geneva, and desire you would direct thither for me, recommended to monsieur Guillaume Boisier.

The company here is very good and sociable; and I have reason to believe the air is the best in the world, if I am to form a judgment of it from the health and long life of the inhabitants. I have half a dozen friends, male and female, who are all of them near or past fourscore, who look and go about as if they were but forty. The provisions of all sorts are extremely good, and the wine is, I think, the most agreeable I ever tasted; and though the ground is now covered with snow, I know nobody troubled with colds, and I observe very few chronical distempers. The greatest inconvenience of the country is the few tolerable rides that are to be picked out, the roads being all mountainous and stony; however, I have got a little horse, and sometimes ramble about after the manner of the duchess of Cleveland, which is the only fashion of riding here.

I am very impatient to hear from you, and hope *your* business does not injure your health.

XXVI.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Chamberry, Jan. 25, 1742.

I HAD the pleasure of receiving yours of Nov. 25, yesterday, and am very glad to find by it that you are arrived in London in good health. I heartily wish you the continuance of it. My deafness lasted only a fortnight, though it frighted me very much. I have had no return of it since. Your advice to Mr. M. was certainly right, but I am not surprised he did not follow it. I believe there are few men in the world (I never knew any) capable of such a strength of resolution as yourself. I have answered your letter from Vienna, but as you do not mention having received mine, perhaps it is lost. I shall add a word or two more concerning the use of Turkish wheat. It is generally declaimed against by all the doctors; and some of them have wrote treatises to show the ill consequences of it, in which they say, that since it has been sown (which is not above 100 years) it may be proved from the registers that the mortality is greater amongst the country people than it was formerly. I believe that may be true in regard to children, who are apt to eat greedily, it being very heavy of digestion; but to those whose stomachs can bear it, and eat it with moderation, I am persuaded it is a clean strengthening diet. I have made strict observations and inquiries on the health and manner of life of the countries in which I have resided, and have

found little difference in the length of life. It is true, gout, stone, and small-pox (so frequent with us), are little know here: in recompense, pleurisies, peripneumonies, and fevers (especially malignant), are far more usual: and I am clearly of opinion that, if an exact computation were made, as many die in Brescia as in London, in proportion to the different numbers. I have not heard from my daughter for a long time; which may be occasioned by the bad weather. I hope both you and she are well. I have wrote to her many long letters.

XXVII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, June 1, 1743.

I HOPE you will take care not to return to London, while it is in this unhealthy state. We are now very clear in these parts. Mrs. Bosville is gone to Turin, where they intend to reside; she had the good fortune to meet an English man-of-war on the coast, without which she would have found the passage very difficult. She had so much her journey at heart, that she undertook to ride over the mountains from Nissa to Savona, but I believe (notwithstanding her youth and spirit) would have found the execution impossible. She has chose the most agreeable court in Europe, where t' English are extremely caressed; but it is neces to be young and gay for such projects. All n *terminate in quiet*; and if I can end my days wi

out great pain, it is the utmost of my ambition. All the English without distinction see the duke of Ormond:* lord Chesterfield (who you know is related to him) lay at his house during his stay in this town; and, to say truth, nobody can be more insignificant. He keeps an assembly where all the best company go twice in the week: I have been there sometimes, nor is it possible to avoid it while I stay here; I came hither not knowing where else to be secure, there being, at that time, strong appearances of an approaching rupture with France, and all Italy being in a flame. The duke lives here in great magnificence, is quite inoffensive, seems to have forgotten every part of his past life, and to be of no party; and indeed this is perhaps the town in the whole world, where politics are the least talked of.

XXVIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, Dec. 20, 1743.

I RECEIVED yours of the 24th of November, O.S. yesterday. You may, perhaps, hear of a trifle which makes a great noise in this part of the world, which is, that I am building; but the whole expense which I have contracted for is but twenty-six pounds. You know the situation of this town is on the meeting of the Rhosne and Durance. On the one side of it within the walls, was formerly a

* He was attainted in 1716.

fortress built on a very high rock; they say it was destroyed by lightning: one of the towers was left partly standing, the walls being a yard in thickness: this was made use of for some time as a public mill; but the height making it inconvenient for the carriage of meal, it has stood useless many years. Last summer in the hot evenings I walked often thither, where I always found a fresh breeze, and the most beautiful land prospect I ever saw (except Wharncliffe); being a view of the windings of two great rivers, and overlooking the whole country, with part of Languedoc and Provence. I was so much charmed with it, that I said in company, that if that old mill were mine, I would turn it into a Belvidere; my words were repeated, and the two consuls waited on me soon after, with a donation from the town of the mill and the land about it: I have added a dome to it, and made it a little rotunda for the aforesaid sum. I have also amused myself with patching up an inscription, which I have communicated to the archbishop, who is much delighted with it; but it is not placed, and perhaps never will be:

* "Hîc, O viator! sub Lare parvulo,
Maria hîc est condita, hîc jacet,
Defuncta humani laboris
Sorte, supervacuâque vitâ.
Non indecorâ pauperie nitens,
Et non inerti nobilis otio,
Vanoque dilectis popello
Divitiis animosus hostis.

* Lady Mary had the merit of applying Cowley's "Epitaphium Vivi Auctoris," published in his works, of which *this is a copy*, with grammatical alteration, where necessary.

Possis et illam dicere mortuam.
En terra jam nunc quantula sufficit!
Exemta sit curis, viator,
Terra sit illa levis, precare!
Hîc sparge flores, sparge breves rosas:
Nam vita gaudet mortua floribus:
Herbisque odoratis corona
Vatis adhuc cinerem calentem.

XXIX.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, Feb. 17, 1743—4.

I AM sorry you have given yourself so much trouble about the inscription. I find I expressed myself ill, if you understood by my letter that it was already placed; I never intended it without your approbation, and then would have put it in the inside of the dome. The word "pauperie" is meant, as is shown by the whole line,

"Non indecorâ pauperie nitens,"

to be a life rather distant from ostentation than in poverty; and which very well answers to my way of living, which, though decent, is far from the show which many families make here. The nobility consists of about two hundred houses: among them are two dukes, those of Crillon and Guadagna; the last an Italian family, the other French. The count of Suze, who values himself very much upon his pedigree, keeps a constant open table, as likewise several others. You will judge by that the

provisions are exceeding cheap; but for strangers the price of every thing is high. As all the gentlemen keep their lands in their own hands, and sell their corn, wine, and oil, their housekeeping looks very great, at a small expense. They have every sort of *gibier* from their own estates, which have never been taxed, the pope drawing (as I am informed) no revenue from hence. The vice-legate has a court of priests, and sees little other company; which, I believe, is partly owing to the little respect the nobility show him, who despise his want of birth. There is a new one expected this spring, nephew to cardinal Acquaviva; he is young, and, they say, intends to live with great magnificence.

Avignon was certainly no town in the time of the Romans; nor is there the smallest remains of any antiquity, but what is entirely Gothic. The town is large, but thinly peopled; here are fourteen large convents, besides others. It is so well situated for trade, and the silk so fine and plentiful, that if they were not curbed, the French not permitting them to trade, they would certainly ruin Lyons; but as they can sell none of their manufactures out of the walls of the town, and the ladies here, as every where else, preferring foreign stuffs to their own, the tradespeople are poor, and the shops ill furnished. The people of quality all affect the French manner of living; and here are many good houses. The climate would be as fine as that of Naples, if they were not persecuted by the north wind, which is almost a constant plague; yet, by the great age of the inhabitants, and the surprising *health* which I see many of them enjoy, I am per-

suaded the air is very wholesome. I see some of both sexes past eighty, who appear in all the assemblies, eat great suppers, and keep late hours, without any visible infirmity. It is to-day Shrove Tuesday, and I am invited to sup at the duchess of Crillon's, where I shall meet near fifty guests, who will all of them, young and old, except myself, go masked to the ball, that is given in the town-house. It is the sixth given this carnival by the gentlemen *gratis*. At the first there were 1200 tickets given out, many coming from the neighbouring towns of Carpentaras, Lisle, Orange, &c. and even Aix and Arles, on purpose to appear there. Don Philip is expected here on the 22d: I believe he will not stay any time; and if he should, I think in my present situation it would be improper for me to wait on him. If he goes into company, I suppose that I may *indifferently* see him at an assembly.

XXX.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, March 23, 1744.

I TAKE this opportunity of informing you, in what manner I came acquainted with the secret I hinted at in my letter of the 5th of February. The society of Freemasons at Nismes presented the duke of Richelieu, governor of Languedoc, with a magnificent entertainment; it is but one day's post from hence, and the duchess of Crillon, with some other ladies of this town, resolved to be at it, and almost by force carried me with them, which I am tempted

to believe an act of Providence, considering my great reluctance, and the service it proved to be to the unhappy innocent people. The greater part of the town of Nismes are serious Protestants, who are still severely punished according to the edicts of Louis XIV. whenever they are detected in any public worship. A few days before we came, they had assembled; their minister and about a dozen of his congregation were seized and imprisoned. I knew nothing of this; but I had not been in the town two hours, when I was visited by two of the most considerable of the Hugonots, who came to beg of me, with tears, to speak in their favour to the duke of Richelieu, saying, none of the Catholics would do it, and the Protestants dared not. The duke of Richelieu was too well bred to refuse to listen to a lady, and I was of a rank and nation to have liberty to say what I pleased; they moved my compassion so much, I resolved to use my endeavour to serve them, though I had little hope of succeeding. I would not, therefore, dress myself for the supper, but went in a domino to the ball, a masque giving opportunity of talking in a freer manner than I could have done without it. I was at no trouble in engaging his conversation: the lady having told him I was there, he immediately advanced towards me; and I found, from different motives, he had a great desire to be acquainted with me, having heard a great deal of me. After abundance of compliments of that sort, I made my request for the liberty of the poor Protestants: he with great freedom told me, he was so little a bigot, that he pitied them as much as I did, but his orders from court were to send them to the galleys. How-

ever, to show how much he desired my good opinion, he was returning, and would solicit their freedom (which he has since obtained.) This obligation occasioned me to continue the conversation, and he asked me what party the pretender had in England; I answered, as I thought, a very small one. "We are told otherwise at Paris," said he; "however, a bustle at this time may serve to facilitate our projects, and we intend to attempt a descent; at least it will cause the troops to be recalled, and perhaps admiral Matthews will be obliged to leave the passage open for Don Philip." You may imagine how much I wished to give immediate notice of this; but as all letters are opened at Paris, it would have been to no purpose to write it by the post, and have only gained me a powerful enemy in the court of France, he being so much a favourite of the king's, that he is supposed to stand candidate for the ministry. In my letter to sir Robert Walpole from Venice, I offered my service, and desired to know in what manner I could send intelligence, if any thing happened to my knowledge that could be of use to England. I believe he imagined that I wanted some gratification, and only sent me cold thanks. I have wrote to you by the post an account of my servant's leaving me. As that is only a domestic affair, I suppose the letter may be suffered to pass. I have had no letter from ——, and am very sure he is in the wrong whenever he does not follow your direction, who, apart from other considerations, have a stronger judgment than any of his advisers.

XXXI.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, May 8, 1744.

I RECEIVED but this morning yours, dated March 22. I suppose this delay has been occasioned by the present disturbances; I do not doubt mine have had the same fate, but I hope you will receive them at length.

I am very well acquainted with lady Sophia Fermor,* having lived two months in the same house with her: she has few equals in beauty or graces. I shall never be surprised at her conquests. If lord Carteret had the design you seem to think, he could not make a more proper choice; but I think too well of his understanding to suppose he can expect his happiness from things unborn, or place it in the chimerical notion of any pleasure arising to him, from his name subsisting (perhaps by very sorry representatives) after his death. I am apt to imagine he indulged his inclination at the expense of his judgment; and it appears to me the more pardonable weakness. I end my reflections here, fearing my letter will not come inviolate to your hands.

I am extremely glad my account of Avignon any thing in it entertaining to you. I have r

* Eldest daughter of Thomas earl of Pomfret: she married to lord Carteret, afterwards earl of Granville. 1744.

forgotten what I wrote, my sight not permitting me to take copies: if there are any particulars you would have explained to you, I will do it to the best of my power. I can never be so agreeably employed as in amusing you.

You say nothing of ——. I guess you have nothing good to say.

I am very much concerned for the ill state of poor lady Oxford's* health: she is the only friend I can depend on in this world (except yourself): she tells me she stays at Welbeck, having been cheated of some thousands by one she employed in her building there, and is very troublesomely engaged in setting things in order.

XXXII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, June 12, N. S. 1744.

I BELIEVE William may tell truth in regard to the expenses of his journey, making it at a time when the passage of the troops had doubled the price of every thing; and they were detained ten days at Calais before they had permission to pass over. I represented these inconveniences to him and his wife before they set out; but they were in such a hurry to go, from a notion that they should be

* Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles, only daughter and heir of John duke of Newcastle, was married in 1713 to Edward earl of Oxford. She died December 8, 1755. Her only daughter was the late duchess of Portland.

forced to stay after the declaration of war, that I could not prevail on them to stay a week longer, though it would probably have saved great part of their expense. I would willingly have kept them (with all faults), being persuaded of their fidelity, and that in case of any accident happening to me, you would have had a faithful account of my effects; but it was impossible to make them contented in a country where there is neither ale nor salt beef.

This town is considerably larger than either Aix or Montpelier, and has more inhabitants of quality than of any other sort, having no trade, from the exactions of the French, though better situated for it than any inland town I know. What is most singular is the government, which retains a sort of imitation of the old Roman: here are two consuls chosen every year, the first of whom from the chief noblesse; and there is as much struggling for that dignity in the Hotel de Ville as in the Senate. The vice-legate cannot violate their privileges. As all governors naturally wish to increase their authority, there are perpetual factions of the same kind as those between prerogative and the liberty of the subject. We have a new vice-legate, arrived a few days since, nephew to cardinal Acquaviva, young, rich, and handsome, and sets out in a greater figure than has ever been known here. The magistrate next to him in place is called the Viguier, who is chosen every year by the Hotel de Ville, and represents the person of the pope in all criminal causes, but his authority is so often clipped by the vice-legate, there remains nothing of it at present but the honour of precedence during his office, an

a box at the play-house gratis, with the superintendence of all public diversions. When Don Philip passed here, he begun the ball with his lady, which is the custom of all princes that pass.

The beginning of Avignon was probably a colony from Marseilles, there having been a temple of Diana on that very spot where I have my little pavilion. If there was any painter capable of drawing it, I would send you a view of the landscape, which is one of the most beautiful I ever saw.

XXXIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, June 8, 1745.

I HAVE this day yours of the 8th of April, O.S. and at the same time one from lady Oxford, who has not received (as she says) any from me since November, though I have wrote several times.

I perfectly remember carrying back the manuscript you mention, and delivering it to lord Oxford. I never failed returning to himself all the books he lent me. It is true, I showed it to the duchess of Montagu, but we read it together, and I did not even leave it with her. I am not surprised that in that vast quantity of manuscripts some should be lost or mislaid, particularly knowing lord Oxford to be careless of them, easily lending, and as easily forgetting he had done it. I remember I carried him once one finely illuminated, that, when I delivered, he did not recollect he had lent to me, though it was but a few days before. Whet-

ever this is, I think you need be in no pain about it. The verses are too bad to be printed, excepting from malice, and since the death of Pope, I know nobody that is an enemy to either of us. I will write to my son the first opportunity I have of doing it. By the post it is impossible at this time. I have seen the French list of the dead and wounded, in which he is not mentioned; so that I suppose he has escaped. All letters, even directed to Holland, are opened; and I believe those to the army would be stopped.

I know so little of English affairs, I am surprised to hear lord Granville* has lost his power.

XXXIV.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Avignon, Nov. 12, 1745.

I RECEIVED yours of October 15, yesterday, November 11. I was quite frightened at the relatio of your indisposition, and am very glad I did n know it till it was over. I hope you will no me suffer the physicians to try experiments with good a constitution as yours. I am persuaded neral waters, which are provided by nature,

* John Carteret, earl Granville, was secretary of st 1720, lord lieutenant of Ireland from 1724 to 1730; i secretary of state, which office he resigned in 1744. H a third time appointed secretary of state in February and removed on the 14th of the same month, to whi cumstance this letter alludes.

the best, perhaps the only real remedies, particularly that of Tunbridge, of which I have a great opinion. I would not trouble you with a long letter, which may be uneasy for you to read.

This present weather is esteemed a prodigy in this country. I begin almost to credit the tradition in Herodotus, and believe the world will once again change its position, and Italy change situation with Muscovy.

I have not stirred out of my apartment these two months, although I have no reason to complain of my health: the continuation of yours is my most earnest wish.

XXXV.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Brescia, May 24, N. S. 1746.

I CAN no longer resist the desire I have to know what is become of ——. I have long suppressed it, from a belief that if there was any thing of good to be told, you would not fail to give me the pleasure of hearing it. I find it now grows so much upon me, that, whatever I am to know, I think it would be easier for me to support, than the anxiety I suffer from my doubts. I beg to be informed, and prepare myself for the worst, with all the philosophy I have. At my time of life I ought to be detached from a world which I am soon to leave; to be totally so is a vain endeavour, and perhaps there is vanity in the endeavour: while we are

human, we must submit to human infirmitie
suffer them in mind as well as body. All th
flection and experience can do is to mitiga
can never extinguish, our passions. I call b
name every sentiment that is not founded
reason, and I own I cannot justify to mine th
cern I feel for one who never gave me any v
satisfaction.

This is too melancholy a subject to dwell
You compliment me on the continuation of n
rits: it is true, I try to maintain them by eve
I can, being sensible of the terrible consequer
losing them. Young people are too apt to let
sink on any disappointment. I have wrote
daughter all the considerations I could th
lessen her affliction. I am persuaded you wi
vise her to amusement, and am very gla
continue that of travelling, as the most
for health. I have been prisoner here
months by the weather: the rivers are still ir
able in most places; when they are abated
tend some little excursions, being of your op
that exercise is as necessary as food, though
at present no considerable complaint; my he
and I think my memory, are without any
and my sight better than I could expect; i
serve me to read many hours in a day. I ha
petite enough to relish what I eat, and ha
same sound uninterrupted sleep that has con
throughout the course of my life, and to w
attribute the happiness of not yet knowin
head-ache. I am very sorry you are so ofter
bled with it, but hope, from your care and te

ance, that if you cannot wholly overcome it, yet it may be so far diminished, as not to give you any great uneasiness, or affect your constitution.

XXXVI.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Brescia, August 25, N. S. 1746.

You will be surprised at the date of this letter, but Avignon has been long disagreeable to me on many accounts, and now more than ever, from the increase of Scotch and Irish rebels, that choose it for their refuge, and are so highly protected by the vice-legate, that it is impossible to go into any company without hearing a conversation that is improper to be listened to, and dangerous to contradict. The war with France hindered my settling there for reasons I have already told you; and the difficulty of passing into Italy confined me, though I was always watching an opportunity of returning thither. Fortune at length presented me one.

I believe I wrote you word, when I was at Venice, that I saw there the count of Wackerbart, who was governor to the prince of Saxony, and is a favourite of the king of Poland, and the many civilities I received from him as an old friend of his mother's. About a month since, a gentleman of the bedchamber of the prince, who is a man of the first quality in this province, I believe charged with some private commission from the Polish court, brought me a letter of recommendation from count Wackerbart, which engaged me to show him what civilities lay

in my power. In conversation I lamented to him the impossibility of my attempting a journey to Italy, where he was going. He offered me his protection, and represented to me that if I would permit him to wait on me, I might pass under the notion of a Venetian lady. In short, I ventured upon it, which has succeeded very well, though I met with more impediments in my journey than I expected. We went by sea to Genoa, where I made a very short stay, and saw nobody, having no passport from that state, and fearing to be stopped, if I was known. We took post-chaises from thence the 16th of this month, and were very much surprised to meet, on the Briletta, the baggage of the Spanish army, with a prodigious number of sick and wounded soldiers and officers, who marched in a very great hurry. The count of Palazzo ordered his servants to say we were in haste for the service of Don Philip, and, without further examination, they gave us place every where; notwithstanding which, the multitude of carriages and loaded mules which we met in these narrow roads made it impossible for us to reach Scravalli till it was near night. Our surprise was great to find, coming out of that town, a large body of troops surrounding a body of guards, in the midst of which was Don Philip in person, going a very round trot, looking down, and pale as ashes. The army was in too much confusion to take notice of us, and the night favouring us, we got into the town; but when we came there, it was impossible to find any lodging, all the inns being filled with wounded Spaniards. The count went to the governor, and asked a chamber for a Venetian lady, which he granted very readily; but there was

nothing in it but the bare walls, and in less than a quarter of an hour after the whole house was empty both of furniture and people, the governor flying into the citadel, and carrying with him all his goods and family. We were forced to pass the night without beds or supper. About day-break the victorious Germans entered the town. The count went to wait on the generals, to whom, I believe, he had a commission. He told them my name, and there was no sort of honour or civility they did not pay me. They immediately ordered me a guard of hussars (which was very necessary in the present disorder,) and sent me refreshments of all kinds. Next day I was visited by the prince of Badin Dourlach, the prince Loüestien, and all the principal officers, with whom I passed for a heroine, showing no uneasiness, though the cannon of the citadel (where was a Spanish garrison) played very briskly. I was forced to stay there two days for want of post-horses, the post-master having fled, with all his servants, and the Spaniards having levied all the horses they could find. At length I set out from thence the 19th instant, with a strong escort of hussars, meeting with no farther accident on the road, except at the little town of Vogherra, where they refused post-horses, till the hussars drew their sabres. The 30th I arrived safe here. It is a very pretty place, where I intend to repose myself at least during the remainder of the summer. This journey has been very expensive; but I am very glad I have made it. I am now in neutral country, under the protection of Venice. The doge is our old friend Grimani, and I do not doubt meeting with all sort of civility. When I set

out I had so bad a fluxion on my eyes, I was really afraid of losing them: they are now quite recovered, and my health better than it has been for some time. I hope yours continues good, and that you will always take care of it. Direct for me at Brescia, by way of Venice.

XXXVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 21, N. S. 1747.

DEAR CHILD,

I AM now in a place the most beautifully romantic I ever saw in my life: it is the Tunbridge of this part of the world, to which I was sent by the doctor's order, my ague often returning, notwithstanding the loads of bark I have taken. To say truth, I have no reason to repent my journey, though I was very unwilling to undertake it, it being ten miles, half by land, and half by water, the land so stony, I was almost shook to pieces; and I had the ill luck to be surprised with a storm on the lake, that, if I had not been near a little port (where I passed a night in a very poor inn), the vessel must have been lost. A fair wind brought me hither next morning early. I found a very good lodging, a great deal of good company, and a village in many respects resembling Tunbridge Wells, not only in the quality of the waters, which is the same, but in the manner of the buildings, most of the hou being separate, at little distances, and all buil the sides of hills, which indeed are far diff

from those of Tunbridge, being six times as high: they are really vast rocks of different figures, covered with green moss or short grass, diversified by tufts of trees, little woods, and here and there vineyards, but no other cultivation, except gardens like those on Richmond-hill. The whole lake of Iseo, which is twenty-five miles long and three broad, is all surrounded with these impassable mountains, the sides of which, towards the bottom, are so thick set with villages (and in most of them gentlemen's seats), that I do not believe there is any where above a mile distance one from another, which adds very much to the beauty of the prospect.

We have an opera here, which is performed three times in the week. I was at it last night, and should have been surprised at the neatness of the scenes, goodness of the voices, and justness of the actors, if I had not remembered I was in Italy. Several gentlemen jumped into the orchestra, and joined in the concert, which I suppose is one of the freedoms of the place, for I never saw it in any great town. I was yet more amazed, while the actors were dressing for the farce that concludes the entertainment, to see one of the principal among them, and as errant a *petit maître* as if he had passed all his life at Paris, mount the stage, and present us with a cantata of his own performing. He had the pleasure of being almost deafened with applause. The ball began afterwards, but I was not witness of it, having accustomed myself to such early hours, that I was half asleep before the opera finished: it begins at ten o'clock, so that it was

one before I could get to bed, though I had supped before I went, which is the custom.

I am much better pleased with the diversions on the water, where all the town assembles every night, and never without music; but we have none so rough as trumpets, kettle-drums, and French horns: they are all violins, lutes, mandolins, and flutes doux. Here is hardly a man that does not excel in some of these instruments, which he privately addresses to the lady of his affections; and the public has the advantage of it, by his adding to the number of the musicians.

The fountain where we drink the waters rises between two hanging hills, and is overshadowed with large trees, that give a freshness in the hottest time of the day.

The provisions are all excellent, the fish of the lake being as large and well tasted as that of Geneva, and the mountains abounding in game, particularly black cocks, which I never saw in any other part of Italy: but none of the amusements here would be so effectual to raising my spirits as a letter from you. I have received none since that of February 27. I do not blame you for it, but my ill fortune, that will not let me have that consolation. The newspaper informs me that the chevalier Grey (so he is styled) is appointed minister at Venice. I wish you would let me know who he is, intending to settle our correspondence through his hands. I did not care to ask that favour of lord Holderness.

Dear child, I am ever your most affectionate mother.

XXXVIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, ———, 1747.

YOURS of the first of December, O. S. came to me this morning, Feb. 2, N. S. I hope your health continues good, since you say nothing to the contrary. I think the duchess of Manchester's silence is the most reasonable part of her conduct; complainers are seldom pitied, and boasters are seldom believed. Her retirement is, in my opinion, no proof either of her happiness or discontent, since her appearance in the world can never be pleasing to her. I was shown at Genoa an ode on Ch. Ch. as a production of Dr. Broxholme. I thought it much in his style, and am apt to believe (from what I know of sir Charles Hanbury) he is more likely to have the vanity to father it than the wit to write it. I have seen heaps of his poetry, but nothing to distinguish him from the tribe of common versifiers. The last I saw was an ode addressed to Mr. Doddington on his courtship of the late duchess of Argyle: those two you mention have never reached me. I should be very much obliged if you would send me copies of them.

The new opera at Brescia, I hear, is much applauded, and I intend to see it before the end of the carnival. The people of this province are much at their ease during the miseries the war occasions their neighbours, and employ all their time in diversions.

We have hitherto had no winter, to the great sorrow of the people here, who are in fear of wanting ice in the summer, which is as necessary as bread. They also attribute a malignant fever, which has carried off great numbers in the neighbouring towns, to the uncommon warmth of the air. It has not infected this village, which they say has ever been free from any contagious distemper. The method of treating the physician here, I think, should be the same every where: they make it his interest that the whole parish should be in good health, giving him a stated pension, which is collected by a tax on every house, on condition that he neither demands any fees, nor ever refuses a visit either to rich or poor. This last article would be very hard, if we had as many vapourish ladies a in England; but those imaginary ills are entire unknown among us, and the eager pursuit aft every new piece of quackery that is introduced. cannot help thinking that there is a fund of dulity in mankind that must be employed so where, and the money formerly given to the m for the health of the soul is now thrown t doctors for the health of the body, and ge with as little prospect of success.

XXXIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Brescia, Jan. 5, 1747—8.

DEAR CHILD,

I AM glad to hear that yourself and family are in good health; and as to the alteration you find in the world, it is only owing to your being better acquainted with it. I have never, in all my various travels, seen but two sorts of people, and those very like one another; I mean men and women, who always have been, and ever will be, the same. The same vices and the same follies have been the fruit of all ages, though sometimes under different names. I remember, when I returned from Turkey, meeting with the same affectation of youth among yours; and I do not doubt but your daughter will find the same, twenty years hence, among hers.)ne of the greatest happinesses of youth is the norance of evil, though it is often the ground of eat indiscretions, and sometimes the active part life is over before an honest mind finds out how e ought to act in such a world as this. I am as ich removed from it as is possible to be on this e the grave, which is from my own inclination, I might have even here a great deal of company; way of living in this province being, I believe, t it is in the sociable part of Scotland, and was ngland a hundred years ago. I had a visit, in olydays, of thirty horse of ladies and gentlewith their servants (by the way, the ladies all

ride like the late duchess of Cleveland). They came with the kind intent of staying with me at least a fortnight, though I had never seen any of them before; but they were all neighbours within ten miles round. I could not avoid entertaining them at supper, and by good luck had a large quantity of game in the house, which, with the help of my poultry, furnished out a plentiful table. I sent for the fiddles, and they were so obliging as to dance all night, and even dine with me the next day, though none of them had been in bed; and were much disappointed I did not ask them to stay, it being the fashion to go in troops to one another's houses, hunting and dancing together a month in each castle. I have not yet returned any of their visits, and I do not intend it for some time, to avoid this expensive hospitality. The trouble of it is not very great, they not expecting any ceremony. I left the room about one o'clock, and they continued their ball in the saloon above stairs, without being at all offended at my departure. But the greatest diversion I had was to see a lady of my own age comfortably dancing with her own husband, some years older; and I can assert that she jumped and galloped with the best of them.

May you be as well satisfied with your family as you are at present, and your children return in your age the tender care you have taken of their infancy. I know no greater happiness that can be wished for you by your most affectionate mother.

XL.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, July 17, N. S. 1746.

Yours of June 7, O. S. came to my hands but yesterday. I am very much vexed and surprised at the miscarriage of my letters. I have never failed answering both yours and my daughter's the very next post after I received them. I began to suspect my servants put the franking money in their pockets, and threw away the letters. I have been in the country this year and a half, though I continued to date from Brescia, as the place to which I would have directed, being, though not the nearest, the safest post-town: I send all my packets thither, and will for the future enclose them to a banker, who I hope will be more careful in forwarding them.

I am glad my daughter's conduct satisfies the opinion I always had of her understanding: I do not wonder at her being well received, in sets of company different from one another, having myself preserved a long intimacy with the duchesses of Marlborough and Montagu, though they were at open war, and perpetually talking of their complaints. I believe they were both sensible I never betrayed either, each of them giving me the strongest proofs of confidence in the last conversations I had with them, which were the last I had in England. What I think extraordinary, is my daughter's continuing so many years agreeable to lord

Bute, Mr. Mackenzie telling me, the last time I saw him, that his brother frequently said among his companions, that he was still as much in love with his wife as before he married her. If the princess's favour lasts, it may be of use to her family. I have often been dubious if the seeming indifference of her highness's behaviour was owing to very good sense, or great insensibility: should it be the first, she will get the better of all her rivals, and probably one day have a large share of power.

I am very much pleased that you accustom yourself to tea, being persuaded that the moderate use of it is generally wholesome. I have planted a great deal in my garden, which is a fashion lately introduced in this country, and has succeeded very well. I cannot say it is as strong as the Indian, but it has the advantage of being fresher, and at least unmixed.

I thank you for the copies of sir Charles Hanbury's poetry, which extremely entertained me. I find tar-water has succeeded to Ward's drop: it is possible by this time that some other quackery has taken place of that: the English are easier than any other nation infatuated by the prospect of universal medicines; nor is there any country in the world where the doctors raise such immense fortunes. I attribute it to the fund of credulity which is in all mankind. We have no longer faith in miracles and reliques, and therefore, with the same fury, run after receipts and physicians: the same money which, three hundred years ago, was give for the health of the soul, is now given for t health of the body, and by the same sort of peop

women and half-witted men: in the country where they have shrines and images, quacks are despised, and monks and confessors find their account in managing the fear and hope which rule the actions of the multitude.

XLI.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Padua, September 16, 1748.

I AM informed that your health and sight are perfectly good, which gives me courage to trouble you with a letter of congratulation on a blessing that is equal to us both: I mean the great and good character I hear from every body of lord Bute. It is a satisfaction I never hoped to have—a son that does honour to his family. I am persuaded you are of my opinion, and had rather be related to him than to any silly duke in Christendom. Indeed, money (however considerable the sum), in the hands of a fool, is as useless as if presented to a monkey, and will as surely be scattered in the street. I need not note examples. My daughter is also generally beloved, and I cannot help communicating to you the pleasure I receive whenever I hear her commended. I am afraid my letter may be too long, as my subject runs away with me. I wish you many years' continuance of the health and spirits I am glad you now enjoy.

XLII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, Oct. 1, N. S. 1748.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE at length received the box, with the books enclosed; for which I give you many thanks, as they amused me very much. I gave a very ridiculous proof of it, fitter indeed for my grand-daughter than myself. I returned from a party on horseback; and after having rode twenty miles, part of it by moonshine, it was ten at night when I found the box arrived. I could not deny myself the pleasure of opening it: and, falling upon Fielding's works, was fool enough to sit up all night reading. I think Joseph Andrews better than his Foundling. I believe I was the more struck with it, having at present a Fanny in my own house, not only by the name, which happens to be the same, but the extraordinary beauty, joined with an understanding yet more extraordinary at her age, which is but few months past sixteen: she is in the post of my chambermaid. I fancy you will tax my discretion for taking a servant thus qualified; but my woman, who is also my housekeeper, was always teazing me with her having too much work, and complaining of ill health, which determined me to take her a deputy; and when I was at Louvere, where I drank the waters, one of the most considerable merchants there pressed me to take this daughter of his: her *mother* has an uncommon good character, and the

girl has had a better education than is usual for those of her rank; she writes a good hand, and has been brought up to keep accounts, which she does to great perfection; and had herself such a violent desire to serve me, that I was persuaded to take her: I do not yet repent it from any part of her behaviour. But there has been no peace in the family ever since she came into it, I might say the parish; all the women in it having declared open war with her, and the men endeavouring all treaties of a different sort: my own woman puts herself at the head of the first party, and her spleen is increased by having no reason for it. The young creature is never stirring from my apartment, always at her needle, and never complaining of any thing. You will laugh at this tedious account of my domestics, (if you have patience to read it over,) but I have few other subjects to talk of.

I am much pleased at your account of your children: may they ever be as agreeable to you as they are at present. The waters have very much mended my health. I endeavour to preserve it by constant riding, and am a better horsewoman than ever I was in my life, having complied with the fashion of this country, which is every way so much better than ours. I cannot help being amazed at the obstinate folly by which the English ladies venture every day their lives and limbs.

My paper only allows me to add, I am your most affectionate mother.

XLIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, Dec. 25, N. S. 17

I HOPE I have now regulated our correspondenc a manner more safe than by Holland. I have a large collection of letters to you and my daug which have all miscarried; neither have I hac line from either for some months.

I was surprised not many days ago by a very e ordinary visit; it was from the duchess of Guas who you know is a princess of the house d'Arms and reported to be near marriage with the ki Sardinia. I confess it was an honour I could e have spared, she coming attended with the gre part of her court; her grand-master, who is br to cardinal Valenti, the first lady of her bed cl ber, four pages, and a long *et cetera* of inferio vants, beside her guard. She entered with an French air, and told me, since I would not c her by coming to her court, she was resolv come to me, and eat a salad of my raising, h heard much fame of my gardening. You may gine I gave her as good a supper as I could. was, (or seemed to be) extremely pleased wi English sack-posset of my ordering. I own her fairly that my house was much at her ser but it was impossible for me to find beds for a suite. She said she intended to return whe moon rose, which was an hour after midnight. *the mean* time I sent for the violins to entertai

attendants, who were very well pleased to dance, while she and her grand master and I played at piquet. She pressed me extremely to return with her to her jointure-house, where she now resides (all the furniture of Guastalla being sold). I excused myself on not daring to venture in the cold night fifteen miles, but promised I would not fail to pay her my acknowledgments for the great honour her highness had done me, in a very short time, and we parted very good friends. She said she intended this spring to retire into her native country. I did not take the liberty of mentioning to her the report of her being in treaty with the king of Sardinia, though it has been in the newspaper of Mantua; but I found an opportunity of hinting it to signor Gonzago, her grand-master, who told me the duchess would not have been pleased to talk of it, since, perhaps, there was nothing in it more than a friendship that had long been between them, and since her widowhood the king sends her an express every day.

I believe you will wish this long story much shorter; but I think you seemed to desire me to lengthen my letters, and I can have no greater pleasure than endeavouring to amuse you.

XLIV.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Gotolingo, April 24, 1749.

C. Mutius Sext: F.
P. Papilius M. F.
Q. Mutius P. F.
M. Cornelius P. F.
II II vir. Turrim Ex D D.
Ad augendam Locavêre
Idemque Probavêre.

THIS is a very fair inscription, in large character
on a large stone found in the pavement of the o
church, and makes now a part of the wall of t
new one, which is now building. The people h
who are as ignorant as their oxen, and live
them, on the product of their land, without t
curiosity for the history of it, would infer from t
that this town is of Roman foundation, t
the walls, which are yet the greatest part st
(only the towers and battlements demol
are very plainly Gothic, and not one bric
found any where of Roman fabric, whic
easily distinguished. I can easily believe
dition, that the old church, which was pr
two years ago, being ready to drop, w
temple, and do not doubt it was a
town founded by the Goths, when t
Italy. The fortifications were strong

the ditch still remaining within the walls being very broad and deep, in which ran the little river that is now before my house, and the moat turned into gardens for the use of the town; the name of which being Gotolingo, is a confirmation of my conjecture. The castle, which certainly stood on the spot where my house does, being on an eminence in the midst of the town, was probably destroyed by fire. When I ordered the court to be levelled, which was grown uneven by long neglect, there were found such quantities of burnt bricks, that plainly showed the remains of a considerable fire; but whether by the enemy, or accidental, I could get no information. They have no records or parish-books, beyond the time of their coming under the Venetian dominion, which is not much above three hundred years ago, at which time they were, as they now are, a large village, being two miles in circuit, and contains at present (as the curate told me) two thousand communicants. The ladies of this neighbourhood, that had given themselves the trouble and expense of going to see Don Philip's entry into Parma, are returned, according to the French saying, *avec un pied de nez*. As they had none of them ever seen a court before, they had figured to themselves prodigious scenes of gallantry and magnificence.

If I did not write by the post, I would tell you several particulars, that I believe would make you laugh. He is retired into the country till the arrival of his princess, who is expected in May next. I take the liberty of enclosing this for lord Bute, not knowing where to direct to him in London.

XLV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, May 7, N. S. 1749.

DEAR CHILD,

I have already wished you joy of your new daughter, and wrote to lord Bute to thank him for his letter. I do not know whether I shall make my court to you in saying it, but I own I cannot help thinking that your family is numerous enough, and that the education and disposal of four girls is employment for a whole life. I remain in a retirement, where my amusements are confined to my garden and dairy; however, I should be glad to know, now and then, what is doing among my acquaintance at London, and beg you will inquire of the price raw silk bears. I have asked this question very often but suppose my letters miscarried, having never had any answer. Your father has been so obliging promise me some ale; if you would send at the same time Colin Campbell's books of architectu consigned to signor Isaac M. de Treves, they w come safe to me. I imagine the duke of King is now building. I was told he intended it on same ground where the last house stood, wh think an ill fancy, being the lowest part of the and he might choose others with a prospec agreeable, which is, in my opinion, the firs to be considered in a country seat. I hav you a large description of that of my dair

which is the most beautiful of any in this province: if I knew it was lost, I would repeat it.

This letter is so dull, that I am quite ashamed to set my name to it.

XLVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, May 27, 1749.

DEAR CHILD,

I HAD the pleasure of your letter two days ago, in which you tell me of the marriage of Mr. Mackenzie,* which I was extremely glad to hear, wishing him happiness, who I think so well deserves it, from an uncommon share of honour and good nature, of which even his indiscretions are proofs. The duchess of Argyle has acted, in my opinion, with equal generosity and prudence; her ill success, in the disposal of lady * * *, has shown her the mistake of interested matches, which are generally unfortunate. This spring has been very melancholy to me, having been tormented with a quotidian ague, of which I am scarcely recovered; and my woman, who is the most necessary servant in the family, still afflicted with a tertian, which puts my whole house in disorder, and hinders my removal to my dairy, to my great mortification, now the heats are begun. If my garden and my house stood

* James Stuart Mackenzie, only brother of John earl of Bute, married lady Betty Campbell, second daughter of John duke of Argyle. He died the 6th of April, 1800.

together, I would not change this seat for lord Tilney's or the marquis of Rockingham's; but, alas! they are some miles asunder.

Your new-fashioned game of brag was the genteel amusement when I was a girl; crimp succeeded to that, and basset and hazard employed the town, when I left it to go to Constantinople. At my return I found them all at commerce, which gave place to quadrille, and that to whist; but the rage of play has ever been the same, and ever will be so among the idle of both sexes. It is the same in every great town, and I think more particularly all over France. Here is a young man of quality, one mile from hence, just of age, who lost last carnival, at Brescia, ten thousand pounds, being all the money his guardians had laid up in his minority; and as his estate is entailed, he cannot raise one farthing on it, and is now a sort of prisoner in his castle, where he lives upon rapine, I mean running in debt to poor people, who, perhaps, he will never be able to pay. I am afraid you are tired with this insignificant letter: we old women love tattling; you must forgive the infirmities of your most affectionate mother.

XLVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Aug. 22, 1749.

We are all very quiet here, all the *beau monde* being hurried away to the fair at Bergamo, which is esteemed the best in Italy, after that of Senegallia. I was much pressed to go there by several parties; but would not fatigue myself with a journey of thirty miles. I am surprised at the account you give of London, yet can hardly suppose that there are not some rational creatures in it. The duchess of Portland must be much altered if she is never out of a crowd; and by the character of lady Middlesex,* who, I am told, is your most intimate companion, I should guess her to be another that would prefer an easy conversation to the noise of an assembly. I very well remember Caenwood House,† and cannot wish you in a more agreeable place. It would be a great pleasure to me to see my grandchildren run about in the gardens. I do not question lord Bute's good taste in the improvements round it, or yours in the choice of the furniture. I have heard the fame of paper hangings, and had some thoughts of sending for a suite, but was

* Miss Boyle, only daughter and heir of Richard ear of Shannon, mistress of the robes to the princess of Wales, afterwards queen Caroline, and wife of Charles earl of Middlesex.

† Caenwood House was rebuilt by the late lord chief justice Mansfield, from a design of Robert Adam.

informed that they were as dear as damask is here,
which put an end to my curiosity.
I am solicitous to see lord Bolingbroke's works.
All the writings I have seen of his appeared to me
to be copied from the French eloquence. I mean a
poor or trite thought dressed in pompous language.
* * * * * * * * * * * * *

All weaknesses appear, as they increase, with
age. I am afraid all human kind are born with the
seeds of them, though they may be totally con-
cealed, and consequently considerably lessened, by
education and philosophy. I have endeavoured to
study and correct myself; and, as courage was
a favourite virtue, I studied to seem void of fear,
and I believe was rather esteemed fool-hardy.
I am now grown timorous, and inclined to low
spirits, whatever you may hear to the contrary
My cheerfulness is like the fire kindled in brush
wood, which makes a show, but is soon turned
cold ashes. I do not, like madame Maintenc
grieve about the decay which is allotted to all m
tals, but would willingly excuse myself to you.

XLVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Salo, Oct. 1

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of August 25 this morn
ber 17, N.S. It was every way welcor
particularly finding you and your fam

health. You will think me a great rambler, being at present far distant from the date of my last letter. I have been persuaded to go to a palace near Salo, situate on the vast lake of Gardia, and do not repent my pains since my arrival, though I have passed a very bad road to it. It is indeed, take it altogether, the first place I ever saw: the king of France has nothing so fine, nor can have in his situation. It is large enough to entertain all his court, and much larger than the royal palace of Naples, or any of those of Germany or England. It was built by the great Cosmo, duke of Florence, where he passed many months, for several years, on the account of his health, the air being esteemed one of the best in Italy. All the offices and conveniences are suitably magnificent; but that is nothing in regard to the beauties without doors. It is seated in that part of the lake which forms an amphitheatre, at the foot of a mountain, near three miles high, covered with a wood of orange, lemon, citron, and pomegranate trees, which is all cut into walks, and divided into terraces, that you may go into a several garden from every floor in the house, diversified with fountains, cascades, and statues, and joined by easy marble staircases, which lead from one to another. There are many covered walks, where you are secure from the sun in the hottest part of the day, by the shade of the orange trees, which are so loaded with fruit, you can hardly have any notion of their beauty without seeing them: they are as large as lime trees in England. You will think I say a great deal: I will assure you I say far short of what I see, and you must turn to the fairy tales to give

any idea of the real charms of this enchant-
palace, for so it may justly be called. The ra-
ety of the prospects, the natural beauties, and the
mprovements by art, where no cost has been spared
to perfect it, render it the most complete habitation
I know in Europe; while the poor present master
of it (to whose ancestor the grand duke presented
it, having built it on his land) having spent a noble
estate by gaming and other extravagance, would be
glad to let it for a trifle, and is not rich enough to
live in it. Most of the fine furniture is sold; there
remains only a few of the many good pictures that
adorned it, and such goods as were not easily to be
transported, or for which he found no chapman. I
have said nothing to you of the magnificent bath,
embellished with statues, or the fish-ponds, to the
chief of which I go from my apartment on the first
floor. It is circled by a marble balustrade, an
supplied by water from a cascade that proce
from the mouth of a whale, on which Neptune
mounted, surrounded with reeds on each side
him are Tritons, which, from their shells, pou
streams that augment the pond. Higher o
hill are three colossal statues of Venus, He
and Apollo. The water is so clear, you
numerous fish that inhabit it; and it is
pleasure to me to throw them bread, w
come to the surface to eat with great
I pass by many other fountains, not
description too tedious. You will wo
never to have heard any mention
either from our English travellers,
printed accounts of Italy; it is a
to them as if it was guarded by

I attribute that ignorance in part to its being twenty miles distant from any post town, and also to the custom of the English, of herding together, avoiding the conversation of the Italians, who, on their side, are naturally reserved, and do not seek strangers. Lady Orford could give you some knowledge of it, having passed the last six months she staid here in a house she hired at Salo; but as all her time was then taken up with the melancholy vapours her distresses had thrown her into, I question whether her curiosity ever engaged her to see this palace, though but half a mile from it.

October 25.

I was interrupted in this part of my letter by a visit from count Martinenghi, master of this house, with his son and two daughters; they staid till this morning, being determined to show me all the fine places on this side the lake, to engage me to grow fond of staying here, and I have had a very pleasant progress in viewing the most remarkable palaces within ten miles round. Three from hence is the little town of Maderna, where the last duke of Mantua built a retreat worthy a sovereign. It is now in the hands of a rich merchant, who maintains it in all its beauty. It is not half so large as Strawberry-hill where I am, but perfectly proportioned and uniform, from a design of Palladio's. The garden is in the style of Le Nôtre, and the furniture in the taste of Paris. I am almost ready to confess it deserves the preference to this, though built at far less expense. The situations are as different as possible, when both of them are between a

mountain and the lake: that under which the duke of Mantua chose to build is much lower than this, and almost sterile; the prospect of it is rather melancholy than agreeable; but the palace being placed at the foot of it, is a mile distant from the lake, which forms a sort of peninsula, half a mile broad, and it is on that is the delightful garden, adorned with parterres, espaliers, all sorts of exotic plants, and ends in a thick wood, cut into ridings; that in the midst is large enough for a coach, and terminates at the lake, which appears from the windows like a great canal made on purpose to beautify the prospect. On the contrary, the palace where I lodge is so near the water, that you step out of the gate into the barge; and the gardens being all divided, you cannot view from the house above one of them at a time. In short, these two palaces may in their different beauties rival each other, while they are neither of them to be excelled in any other part of the world.

I have wrote you a terrible long letter: but, as you say you are often alone, it may serve you for half an hour's amusement; at least, receive it as proof that there is none more agreeable to me than giving assurances of my being, dear child, your most affectionate mother.

XLIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, November 1, 1749.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of August 25, and my lord Bute's obliging notice of your safe delivery at the same time. I wish you joy of your young son, and of every thing else. You do not mention your father, by which I suppose he is not returned to England, and am in pain for his health, having heard but once from him since he left it, and know not whether he has received my letters. I dare say you need not be in any doubt of his good opinion of you; for my part, I am so far persuaded of the goodness of your heart, I have often had a mind to write you a consolatory epistle on my own death, which I believe will be some affliction, though my life is wholly useless to you. That part of it which we passed together you have reason to remember with gratitude, though I think you misplace it: you are no more obliged to me for bringing you into the world, than I am to you for coming into it, and I never made use of that common-place (and, like most common-place, false) argument, as exacting any return of affection. There was a mutual necessity on us both to part at that time, and no obligation on either side. In the case of your infancy, there was so great a mixture of instinct, I can scarce even put that in the number of the proofs I have given you of my love: but I confess I

think it a great one, if you compare my after conduct toward you with that of other mothers, who generally look on their children as devoted to their pleasures, and bound by duty to have no sentiments but what they please to give them; play-things at first, and afterwards the objects on which they may exercise their spleen, tyranny, or ill humour. I have always thought of you in a different manner. Your happiness was my first wish, and the pursuit of all my actions, divested of all self-interest; so far I think you ought, and believe you do, remember me as your real friend. Absence and distance have not the power to lessen any part of my tenderness for you, which extends to all yours, and I am ever your most affectionate mother.

I play at whist an hour or two every afternoon. The fashion here is to play for the collation, so that the losers have at least the consolation of eating part of their money.

L.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, November 29, 1749.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED your agreeable letter of September 21, yesterday, November 29, and am very glad our daughter (for I think she belongs to us both) turns out so much to your satisfaction; may she ever do so! I hope she has by this time received my token. You please me extremely in saying my letters are o'

any entertainment to you. I would contribute to your happiness in every shape I can; but, in my solitude, there are so few subjects present themselves, it is not easy to find one that would amuse you; though, as I believe, you have some leisure hours at Caenwood, where any thing new is welcome. I will venture to tell you a small history, in which I had some share. I have already informed you of the divisions and subdivisions of estates in this country, by which you will imagine there is a numerous gentry of great names, and little fortunes; six of those families inhabit this town. You may fancy this forms a sort of society; but far from it, as there is not one of them that does not think (for some reason or other) they are far superior to all the rest: there is such a settled aversion among them, they avoid one another with the utmost care, and hardly ever meet, except by chance at the castle (as they call my house,) where their regard for me obliges them to behave civilly; but it is with an affected coldness that is downright disagreeable, and hinders me from seeing any of them after.

I was quietly reading in my closet, when I was interrupted by the chamber-maid of the signora Laura Bono, who flung herself at my feet, and, in an agony of sobs and tears, begged me, for the love of the holy Madona, to hasten to her master's house, where the two brothers would certainly murder one another, if my presence did not stop their fury. I was very much surprised, having always heard them spoken of as a pattern of fraternal union. However, I made all possible speed thither, without staying for hoods or attendance, and was

soon there, the house touching my garden-wall. I was directed to the bed-chamber by the noise of oaths and execrations; but, on opening the door, was astonished to a degree you may better guess than I describe, by seeing the signora Laura prostrate on the ground, melting in tears, and her husband standing with a drawn stiletto in his hand, swearing she should never see to-morrow's sun. I was soon let into the secret. The good man, having business of consequence at Brescia, went thither early in the morning; but, as he expected his chief tenant to pay his rent that day, he left orders with his wife, that if the farmer, who lived two miles off, came himself, or sent any of his sons, she should take care to make him very welcome. She obeyed him with great punctuality, the money coming in the hand of a handsome lad of eighteen: she did not only admit him to her own table, and produce the best wine in the cellar, but resolved to give him *chere entiere*. While she was exercising this generous hospitality, the husband met midway the gentleman he intended to visit, who was posting to another side of the country: they agreed on another appointment, and he returned to his own house, where, giving his horse to be led round to the stable by the servant that accompanied him, he opened his door with the *pas-partout* key, and proceeded to his chamber, without meeting any body, where he found his beloved spouse asleep on the bed, with her gallant. The opening of the door waked them: the young fellow immediately leaped out of the window, which looked into the garden, and was open being summer, and escaped over the fields, leaving his clothes on a chair by the bed-side—

circumstance. In short, the case was such, think the queen of fairies herself could nd an excuse, though Chaucer tells us she a solemn promise to leave none of her sex hed with one, to all eternity. As to the ninal, she had nothing to say for herself t I dare swear you will hear from the daughter, if ever you catch her stealing of ats—" Pray, pray, she would do so no more, ed it was the first time." This last article credit with me: I cannot be persuaded woman who had lived virtuous till forty is her age) could suddenly be endowed h consummate impudence, to solicit a first sight, there being no probability, his station considered, that he would have attempt of that kind. I must confess I ed enough to think the unblemished repue had hitherto maintained, and did not t us in mind of, was owing to a series of ics; and to say truth, they are the only hat can reasonably hope to remain undis-

Ladies that can resolve to make love thus e may pass unobserved, especially if they nt themselves with low life, where fear e their favourites to secrecy: there wants y lewd constitution, a very bad heart, and te understanding, to make this conduct I do not doubt it has been practised by ides beside her I am now speaking of. be sure I did not communicate these re-

The first word I spoke was to desire rlo to sheathe his poniard, not being ith its glittering: he did so very readily,

begging my pardon for not having done it on my first appearance, saying he did not know what he did, and indeed he had the countenance and gesture of a man distracted. I did not endeavour a defence; that seemed to me impossible: but represented to him, as well as I could, the crime of a murder, which, if he could justify before men, was still a crying sin before God; the disgrace he would bring on himself and posterity, and the irreparable injury he would do his eldest daughter, a pretty girl of fifteen, that I knew he was extremely fond of. I added, that if he thought it proper to part from his lady, he might easily find a pretext for it some months hence; and that it was as much his interest as hers to conceal this affair from the knowledge of the world. I could not presently make him taste these reasons, and was forced to stay there near five hours (almost from five to ten at night) before I durst leave them together, which I would not do till he had sworn in the most serious manner he would make no future attempt on her life. I was content with his oath, knowing him to be very devout, and found I was not mistaken. How the matter was made up between them afterwards I know not; but it is now two years since it happened, and all appearances remain as if it had never been. The secret is in very few hands; his brother, being at that time at Brescia, I believe knows nothing of it to this day. The chamber-maid and myself have preserved the strictest silence, and the lady retains the satisfaction of insulting all her acquaintance on the foundation of a spotless character, that only she can boast in the parish, *where* she is most heartily hated, from these airs

of impertinent virtue, and another very essential reason, being the best dressed woman among them, though one of the plainest in her figure.

The discretion of the chamber-maid in fetching me, which possibly saved her mistress's life, and her taciturnity since, I fancy appear very remarkable to you; and is what would certainly never happen in England. The first part of her behaviour deserves great praise; coming of her own accord, and inventing so decent an excuse for her admittance: but her silence may be attributed to her knowing very well that any servant who presumes to talk of his master will most certainly be incapable of talking at all in a short time, their lives being entirely in the power of their superiors; I do not mean by law, but by custom, which has full as much force. If one of them was killed, it would either never be inquired into at all, or very slightly passed over; yet it seldom happens: I know no instance of it, which I think is owing to the great submission of domestics, who are sensible of their dependence, and the national temper not being hasty, and never inflamed by wine, drunkenness being a vice abandoned to the vulgar, and spoke of with greater detestation than murder, which is mentioned with as little concern as a drinking bout in England, and is almost as frequent. It was extremely shocking to me at my first coming, and still gives me a sort of horror, though custom has in some degree familiarised it to my imagination. Robbery would be pursued with great vivacity, and punished with the utmost rigour, therefore is very rare, though stealing is in daily practice; but as all the peasants are suffered the use of fire-arms, the slightest provoca-

tion is sufficient to shoot, and they see one of their own species lie dead before them with as little remorse as a hare or a partridge, and, when revenge spurs them on, with much more pleasure. A dissertation on this subject would engage me in a discourse not proper for the post.

Your most affectionate mother.

LI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dec. 17, N. S. 1749.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of October 14 but yesterday: the negligence of the post is very disagreeable. I have at length had a letter from lady Oxford, by which I find mine to her has miscarried, and perhaps the answer which I have now wrote may have the same fate.

I wish you joy of your young son: may he live to be a blessing to you. I find I amuse myself here in the same manner as if at London, according to your account of it; that is, I play at whist every night with some old priests that I have taught it to, and are my only companions. To say truth, the decay of my sight will no longer suffer me to read by candle-light, and the evenings are now long and dark. I believe you will be persuaded my gaming makes nobody uneasy, when I tell you that we play only a penny per corner. It is now a year that I have lived wholly in the country, and have no *design of quitting* it. I am entirely given up to rural

amusements, and have forgot there are any such things as wits or fine ladies in the world. However, I am pleased to hear what happens to my acquaintance. I wish you would inform me what is become of the Pomfret family, and who sir Francis Dashwood* has married. I knew him at Florence: he seemed so nice in the choice of a wife, I have some curiosity to know who it is that has had charms enough to make him enter into an engagement he used to speak of with fear and trembling.

I am ever, dear child,
Your most affectionate mother.

LII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Brescia, Nov. 20, 1750.

I RECEIVED yours of October the 3d much sooner than I have done any others of late, although it had been opened. The great difference between the Venetian state and that of the church has been slightly mentioned in the newspapers. It is not yet thoroughly accommodated, though much softened since I wrote. I am very glad of lord Bute's good fortune. I have wished my daughter joy in a long letter. I do not write so copiously to you, fearing it should be troublesome to your eyes. I

* He married Sarah, daughter and coheir of Thomas Gould, esq. of Ivor, county of Bucks, and widow of sir Richard Ellis, bart.

sent some Italian poetry which has been much admired here. I wonder you do not imitate, at London, the wise conduct of this state, who, when they found the rage of play untameable, invented a method to turn it to the advantage of the public; now, fools lose their estates, and the government gains by it. The continuation of your health is my most fervent desire, and the news of it my greatest pleasure.

P. S. I have seen lately a history of the last years of queen Anne, by Swift. I should be very glad to know your opinion of it. Some facts are apparently false, and I believe others partially represented.

LIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dec. 24, 1750.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of October the 28th this morning, December 24th, N. S. I am afraid a letter of two sheets of paper that I sent you from Salo never came to your hands, which I am very sorry for: it would have been, perhaps, some entertainment, being the description of places that I am sure you have not found in any book of travels. I also made my hearty congratulations to lord Bute and yourself on his place, which I hope is an earnest of future advantages. I desired you would send me all the *books of which* you gave a catalogue, except H.

Fielding's and his sister's, which I have already. I thank God my taste still continues for the gay part of reading. Wiser people may think it trifling, but it serves to sweeten life to me, and is, at worst, better than the generality of conversation. I am extremely pleased with the account you give me of your father's health: his life is the greatest blessing that can happen to his family. I am very sincerely touched with the duchess of Montagu's misfortune,* though I think it no reasonable cause for locking herself up. Age and ugliness are as inseparable as heat and fire, and I think it all one in what shape one's figure grows disagreeable. I remember the princess of Moldavia at Constantinople made a party of pleasure the next day after losing one of her eyes; and, when I wondered at her philosophy, said, she had more reason to divert herself than she had before. It is true our climate is apt to inspire more melancholy ideas: the enlivening heat of the sun continues the cheerfulness of youth to the grave with most people. I received a visit not long since from a fair young lady, that had new lain in of her nineteenth child: in reality, she is but thirty-seven, and has so well preserved her fine shape and complexion, she appears little past twenty. I wish you the same good fortune, though not quite so numerous a posterity. Every happiness is ardently desired for you by, dear child, your most affectionate mother.

* Lady Mary Churchill, youngest daughter of John duke of Marlborough, wife of John duke of Montagu, died May 4, 1751.

P. S. My compliments to lord Bute, and blessi to all your little ones. I am ashamed not to h sent my token to my god-daughter: I hope to d in a short time.

LIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, April 2, N. S. 17

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM very glad to hear of your health and reco being always uneasy till your danger is over. I v you joy of your young son, and that you may l comfort in your numerous family.

I am not surprised to hear the duke of King remains unmarried: he is, I fear, surrounded v people whose interest it is he should continue I desire to know the name of his present incli tion. By the manner you speak of it, I supp there is no occasion for the nicety of avoiding name. I am sorry the prince* has an episc education: he cannot have a worse both for him and the nation. Though the court of Englan no more personally to me than the court of Pe yet I cannot help some concern for my native co try; nor can I see any good purpose from chu precepts, except they design him to take orders. confess, if I was king of Great Britain, I wo certainly be also archbishop of Canterbury; bu

* King George III.

believe that is a refinement of politics that will never enter into the heads of our managers, though there is no other way of having supreme power in church and state. I could say a great deal in favour of this idea; but, as neither you nor I will ever be consulted on the subject, I will not trouble you with my speculative notions.

I am very much pleased to hear of your father's good health. That every blessing may attend you is the earnest and sincere wish of, dear child, your affectionate mother.

LV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

April 15, N. S. 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of Feb. 10th with great pleasure, as it brought me the news of your health, and that of your family. I cannot guess who you mean by lord Montfort,* there being no such title when I left England, nor any lord Hertford,† who I hear named ambassador to France: these are all new people to me. I wish you would give me some information concerning them: none can be so agreeable as the continuation of your father's health: I see in him the good effect of a strict abstinence and regular exercise. I am much pleased (but not

* Henry Bromley, created baron Montfort 1741.
† Francis Seymour Conway, created earl of Hertford

at all surprised) at his kindness to you: I know him to be more capable of a generous action than any man I ever knew. I have never heard one word of the books that you told me were packed up last June. These things are very provoking, but fretting mends nothing. I will continue to write on, though the uncertainty of your receiving my letters is a strong abatement of my pleasure in writing, and will be of heavy consequence to my style. I feel at this minute the spirit of dulness chill my heart, and I am ready to break out into alacks and alases, with many murmurs against my cruel destiny, that will not even permit this distant conversation between us without such allaying circumstances. However, I beg you not to be discouraged. I am persuaded, from the goodness of your heart, that you are willing to give me happiness, and I can have none here so great as a letter from you. You can never want subjects; and I can assure you that your eldest daughter cannot be more delighted with a birth-day suit, or your youngest with a paper of sugar-plums, than I am at the sight of your hand. You seem very anxious on the account of your children's education. I have said all I have to say on that head; and am still of the same opinion, that learning is necessary to the happiness of women, and ignorance the common foundation of their errors, both in morals and conduct. I was well acquainted with a lady (the duchess of M***r) who, I am persuaded, owed all her misfortunes to the want of instruction in her youth. You know another, who, if she had had her natural good understanding cultivated by letters, would *never have mistaken* Johnny Gay for a wit, and much

less have printed, that he took the liberty of calling her his Laura.*

I am pleasingly interrupted by the welcome information from lord Bute that you are safely delivered of a son. I am never in pain for any of that sex. If they have any merit, there are so many roads for them to meet good fortune, they can no way fail but by not deserving it. We have but one of establishing ours, and that surrounded with precipices, and perhaps after all better missed than found. I have already told you I look on my granddaughters as lay nuns. Lady * * * might avoid that destiny, if religion was not a bar to her being disposed of in this country. You will laugh to hear it, but it is really true, I had proposed to me a young man of quality, with a good estate: his parents are both dead. She would find a fine palace, and neither want jewels nor equipage; and her name (with a present from me) be thought sufficient fortune.

I shall write to lord Bute this post. My blessing to you and yours is sincerely sent from your most affectionate mother.

* The duchess of Queensbury.

LVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 19, N. S. 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM much obliged to lord Bute for thinking of m so kindly: to say truth, I am as fond of baubles a ever, and am so far from being ashamed of it, tha it is a taste I endeavour to keep up with all the ar I am mistress of. I should have despised them a twenty for the same reason that I would not ea tarts or cheesecakes at twelve years old, as being too childish for one capable of more solid pleasures I now know (and, alas! have long known) all things in this world are almost equally trifling, and our most serious projects have scarce more foundation than those edifices that your little ones raise in cards. You see to what period the vast fortunes of the duke and duchess of Marlborough and sir Robert Walpole are soon arrived. I believe as you do, that lady Orford is a joyful widow, but am persuaded she has as much reason to weep for her husband as ever any woman has had, from Andromache to this day. I never saw any second marriage that did not appear to me very ridiculous: hers is accompanied with circumstances that render the folly complete.

Sicknesses have been very fatal in this country, as well as England. I should be glad to know the names of those you say are deceased: I believe I am ignorant of half of them, the Dutch news be-

ing forbid here. I would not have you give yourself the trouble, but order one of your servants to transcribe the catalogue. You will perhaps laugh at this curiosity. If you ever return to Bute, you will find that what happens in the world is a considerable amusement in solitude. The people I see here make no more impression on my mind than the figures in the tapestry: while they are directly before my eyes, I know one is clothed in blue, and another in red; but out of sight, they are so entirely out of memory, I hardly remember whether they are tall or short. I sometimes call myself to account for this insensibility, which has something of ingratitude in it, this little town thinking themselves highly honoured and obliged by my residence: they intended me an extraordinary mark of it, having determined to set up my statue in the most conspicuous place: the marble was bespoke, and the sculptor bargained with, before I knew any thing of the matter; and it would have been erected without my knowledge, if it had not been necessary for him to see me to take the resemblance. I thanked them very much for the intention; but utterly refused complying with it, fearing it would be reported (at least in England) that I had set up my own statue. They were so obstinate in the design, I was forced to tell them my religion would not permit it. I seriously believe it would ave been worshipped, when I was forgotten, under ne name of some saint or other, since I was to have en represented with a book in my hand, which uld have passed for a proof of canonization. is compliment was certainly founded on reasons unlike those that first famed goddesses,

mean being useful to them, in which I am second to Ceres. If it be true she taught the art of sowing wheat, it is certain I have learned them to make bread, in which they continued in the same ignorance Misson complains of (as you may see in his letter from Padua). I have introduced French rolls, custards, minced pies, and plum-pudding, which they are very fond of. It is impossible to bring them to conform to syllabub, which is so unnatural a mixture in their eyes, they are even shocked to see me eat it: but I expect immortality from the science of butter-making, in which they are become so skilful from my instructions, I can assure you here is as good as in any part of Great Britain. I am afraid I have bragged of this before; but when you do not answer any part of my letters, I suppose them lost, which exposes you to some repetitions. Have you received that I wrote on my first notice of the prince's death? I shall receive lord Bute's china with great pleasure. The pearl necklace for my god-daughter has been long packed up for her, I wish I could say sent. In the mean time, give her, and the rest of yours, my blessing; with thanks and compliments to lord Bute, from your most affectionate mother.

P. S. I desire you would order the china to be packed up by some skilful man of the trade, or I shall receive it in pieces.

LVII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, June 20, N. S. 1751.

I RECEIVED yours of May the 9th, yesterday, with great satisfaction, finding in it an amendment of your health. I am not surprised at lady Orford's* folly, having known her at Florence: she made great court to me. She has parts, and a very engaging manner. Her company would have amused me very much, but I durst not indulge myself in it, her character being in universal horror: I do not mean from her gallantries, which nobody trouble their heads with; but she had a collection of free-thinkers that met weekly at her house, to the scandal of all good Christians. She invited me to one of these honourable assemblies, which I civilly refused, not desiring to be thought of her opinion, nor thinking it right to make a jest of ordinances that are (at least) so far sacred, as they are absolutely necessary in all civilized governments; and it is being in every sense an enemy to mankind, to endeavour to overthrow them. Tar water is arrived in Italy. I have been asked several questions concerning the use of it in England. I do not find

* Margaret, daughter and heir of Samuel Rolle, esq. of Haynton, county of Devon, and relict of Robert, second earl of Orford, who died in 1751, married the honourable Sewallis Shirley in the same year. She resided principally at Florence.

it makes any great progress here; the doctors confine it to a possibility of being useful in the cure of inward ulcers, and allow it no farther merit. I told you, some time ago, the method in this country of making it the interest of the physicians to keep the town in good health. I wish that, and the Roman law concerning last testaments, were imported for the good of England: I know no foreign fashion or quackery that would be so useful among us. I have wrote a long letter to my daughter this post; I cannot help fearing for her. Time and distance have increased, and not diminished, my tenderness for her. I own it is stronger than my philosophy: my reason agrees with Atticus, but my passions are the same with Tully's.

LVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 23, 1751.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yesterday, July 22, N. S. yours of June 2d. I own I could not help regretting the duchess of Montagu, (with whom I have passed many agreeable hours,) though I think I am in the wrong in so doing, being persuaded her life was grow burthensome to her, and I believe she would n own herself in danger, to avoid the remedies th would have been pressed upon her. I am not s prised at lady Orford's marriage: her money *doubtless* convenient to Mr. Shirley, and I *swear she piques herself* on not being able to r

him any thing. It has been her way with all her lovers: he is the most creditable of any she ever had: his birth and sense will induce him to behave to her with decency, and it is what she has not been much used to. As it is a true saying, "Cowards more blows than any hero bear;" it is as certainly true, ladies of pleasure (very improperly so called) suffer more mortifications than any nun of the most austere order that ever was instituted. Lady Orford is a shining instance of that truth; the most submissive wife to the most tyrannic husband that ever was born, is not such a slave as I saw her at Florence. I have hardly ever seen engagements of that sort on another footing. Contempt is joined with intimacy in those cases, and there are few men that do not indulge the malignity that is in human nature, when they can do it (as they fancy) justifiably.

I have had a return, though in a less degree, of the distemper I had last year, and am afraid I must go again to the waters of Louvere. The journey is so disagreeable, I would willingly avoid it; and I have little taste for the diversions of the place.

August 1.

Thus far of my letter was wrote at Gotolingo, and it is concluded at Louvere, where the doctors have dragged me. I find much more company than ever. I have done by these waters as I formerly did by those at Islington: you may remember when I first carried you there, we scarce saw any but ourselves, and in a short time we could hardly find room for the crowd. I arrived but last night, so can say nothing of my success in relation to my

health. I must end my letter in a hurry: here i company; and I can only say I am ever your mos affectionate mother.

LIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Nov. 2, 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM always pleased when I hear you have beer with the duke and duchess of Portland, being persuaded they are both worthy and sincere friends o yours. I wrote so many letters to dear lady Oxford without receiving any answer, that I was in great pain on her account. I will write again, though I lose so much of my writing: I am afraid it will only be more time and paper thrown away. I pity poor lady D * * *, who, perhaps, thinks herself at present an object of envy: she will be soon undeceived: no rich widow can marry on prudential motives; and where passion is only on one side, every marriage must be miserable. If she thought justly she would know that no man ever was in love with a woman of forty, since the deluge: a boy may be so; but that blaze of straw only lasts till he is old enough to distinguish between youth and age, which generally happens about seventeen: till that time the whole sex appears angelic to a warm constitution; but as that is not Mr. T * * *'s case, all she can hope is a cold complaisance, founded on gratitude, which is the most uncertain of all foundations for a lasting union. I know not how I

whether obligers are apt to exact too large returns, r whether human pride naturally hates to remember obligation, but I have seldom seen friendships ontinue long, where there have been great benefits onferred; and I should think it the severest suf-ering to know I was a burthen on the good-nature f a man I loved, even if I met a mind so generous s to dissemble a disgust which he could not help eling. Lady D * * * had fond parents, and, as I ave heard, an obliging husband. Her sorrowful ours are now coming on: they will be new to her, nd it is a cruel addition to reflect (as she must do) iat they have been her own purchasing. I wish ıy favourite lady Mary Coke may make use of her tter experience to escape the snares laid for her: ey are so various and so numerous, if she can oid them, I shall think she has some supernatu-l assistance, and her force more wonderful than ıy of Don Quixotte's heroes, though they van-ıished whole armies by the strength of a single nce. I have sent lady * * * a little ring: if it mes safe, I will find something for lady * * *: I pect a letter of thanks. I think I have ill luck if ne of my grand-daughters have a turn for wri-ng: she that has will be distinguished by me. I ave sent you three bills of exchange; it does not ppear you have received one: what method to ke I cannot imagine: I must depend on my new lend, who is a merchant of the Valteline. If the ar breaks out, difficulties will increase; though ır correspondence can hardly be more interrupted an it is already. I must endure it as set down by stiny in the long list of mortifications allotted to,

Dear child,

Your most affectionate mother.

LX.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, Nov. 10, N. S. 1751.

I RECEIVED yours of October 10, this day, which is much quicker than any I ever had from England. I will not make any reflections on the conduct of the person you mention; it is a subject too melancholy to us both: I am of opinion tallying at bassette is a certain revenue (even without cheating) to those who can get constant punters, and are able to submit to the drudgery of it; but I never knew any one pursue it long, and preserve a tolerable reputation. The news of the recovery of your health makes me amends for the displeasure of hearing his ill figure.

I have often read and been told, that the air of Hungary is better, and the inhabitants in general longer lived, than in any other part of Europe. You have given me a very surprising instance of it. far surpassing in age the old woman of Louvere though, in some circumstances, I think her story extraordinary. She died but ten years ago; and is well remembered by the inhabitants of that place the most creditable of whom have all assured me the truth of the following facts:—She kept greatest inn there till past fifty: her husband dying, and she being rich, she left off that and having a large house, with a great deal of niture, she let lodgings, which her daughters maids past seventy) still continue.

them the first year of my going to those waters. She lived to one hundred years with good health; but in the last five years of it fell into the decays common to that period—dimness of sight, loss of teeth, and baldness; but in her hundredth year, her sight was totally restored, she had a new set of teeth, and a fresh head of brown hair. I mentioned it to several ladies, who none of them had heard it, but the rest was confirmed to me by every body. She lived in this renewed vigour ten years, and then had her picture drawn, which has a vivacity in the eyes and complexion that would become five-and-twenty, though, by the falls in the face, one may discern it was drawn for a very old person. She died merely of an accident, which would have killed any other; tumbling down a very bad stone stair-case, which goes into the cellar, she broke her head in such a manner, she lived but two days. The physician and surgeon, who attended her, told me that her age no way contributed to her death. I inquired whether there was any singularity in her diet, but heard of none, excepting that her breakfast was every morning a large quantity of bread sopped in cold water. The common food of the peasants in this country is the Turkish wheat you mention, which they dress in various manners, but use little milk, it being chiefly reserved for cheese, or the tables of the gentry. I have not observed, either among the poor or rich, that in general they live longer than in England. This woman of Lourre is always spoken of as a prodigy; and I am surprised she is neither called saint nor witch, being very prodigal of those titles.

I return you many thanks for the length of your

entertaining letter; but am very sorry it was troublesome to you to write it. I wish the reading of this may not be so. I will seek for a picture for lord Bute.

LXI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dec. 8, N. S. 1751.

MY DEAR CHILD,

This town is at present in a general stare, or, to use their own expression, *sotto sopra;* and not only this town, but the capital, Bergamo, the whole province, the neighbouring Brescian, and perhaps all the Venetian dominion, occasioned by an adventure exactly resembling, and I believe copied from, Pamela. I know not under what constellation that foolish stuff was wrote, but it has been translated into more languages than any modern performance I ever heard of. No proof of its influence was ever stronger than this present story, which, in Richardson's hands, would serve very well to furnish out seven or eight volumes. I shall make it as short as I can.—Here is a gentleman's family, consisting of an old bachelor and his sister, who have fortune enough to live with great elegance, though without any magnificence, possessed of the esteem of all their acquaintance, he being distinguished by his probity, and she by her virtue. They are not only suffered but sought after by all *the* best company, and indeed are the most conversable and reasonable people in the place. She

is an excellent housewife, and particularly remarkable for keeping her pretty house as neat as any in Holland. She appears no longer in public, being past fifty, and passes her time chiefly at home with her work, receiving few visitants. This signora Diana, about ten years since, saw, at a monastery, a girl of eight years old, who came thither to beg alms for her mother. Her beauty, though covered with rags, was very observable, and gave great compassion to the charitable lady, who thought it meritorious to rescue such a modest sweetness as appeared in her face from the ruin to which her wretched circumstances exposed her. She asked her some questions, to which she answered with a natural civility that seemed surprising; and finding the head of her family (her brother) to be a cobbler, who could hardly live by that trade, she bid the child follow her home, and, sending for her parent, proposed to her to breed the little Octavia for her servant. This was joyfully accepted; the old woman dismissed with a piece of money, and the girl remained with the signora Diana, who bought her decent clothes, and took pleasure in teaching her whatever she was capable of learning. She learned to read, write, and cast accounts, with uncommon facility; and had such a genius for work, that she excelled her mistress in embroidery, point, and every operation of the needle. She grew perfectly skilled in confectionary, had a good insight into cookery, and was a great proficient in distillery. To these accomplishments she was so handy, well-bred, humble, and modest, that not only her master and mistress, but every body that frequented the house, took notice of her. She lived

ear nine years, never going out but to church.
ver, beauty is as difficult to conceal as light;
began to make a great noise. Signora Diana
me she observed an unusual concourse of ped-
g women that came on pretext to sell penny-
rths of lace, china, &c. and several young gentle-
en, very well powdered, that were perpetually
alking before her door, and looking up at the
indows. These proguostics alarmed her pru-
dence, and she listened very willingly to some
honourable proposals that were made by many
honest thriving tradesmen. She communicated
them to Octavia, and told her, that though she was
sorry to lose so good a servant, yet she thought it
right to advise her to choose a husband. The girl
answered modestly that it was her duty to obey all
her commands, but she found no inclination to
marriage; and if she would permit her to live
single, she should think it a greater obligation than
any other she could bestow. Signora Diana was
too conscientious to force her into a state from
which she could not free her, and left her to her
own disposal. However, they parted soon after
whether (as the neighbours say) signor Aurel
Ardinghi, her brother, looked with too much
tention on the young woman, or that she her
(as Diana says) desired to seek a place of
profit, she removed to Bergamo, where she
found preferment, being strongly recommend
the Ardinghi family. She was advanced to b
waiting-woman to an old countess, who was
pleased with her service, she desired, on her
bed, count Jeronimo Losi, her son, to be
her. He found no repugnance to this act

ence, having distinguished the beautiful Octavia, from the first sight of her; and, during the six months that she had served in the house, had tried every art of a fine gentleman, accustomed to victories of that sort, to vanquish the virtue of this fair virgin. He has a handsome figure, and has had an education uncommon in this country, having made the tour of Europe, and brought from Paris all the improvements that are to be picked up there, being celebrated for his grace in dancing, and skill in fencing and riding, by which he is a favourite among the ladies, and respected by the men. Thus qualified for conquest, you may judge of his surprise at the firm yet modest resistance of this country girl, who was neither to be moved by address, nor gained by liberality, nor on any terms would be prevailed on to stay as his housekeeper, after the death of his mother. She took that post in the house of an old judge, where she continued to be solicited by the emissaries of the count's passion, and found a new persecutor in her master, who, after three months' endeavour to corrupt her, offered her marriage. She chose to return to her former obscurity, and escaped from his pursuit, without asking any wages, and privately returned to the signora Diana. She threw herself at her feet, and, kissing her hands, begged her with tears to conceal her at least some time, if she would not accept of her service. She protested she had never been happy since she left it. While she was making these submissions, signor Aurelio entered. She entreated his intercession on her knees, who was easily persuaded to consent she should stay with them, though his sister blamed her highly for her

precipitate flight, having no reason, from the age and character of her master, to fear any violence, and wondered at her declining the honour he offered her. Octavia confessed that perhaps she had been too rash in her proceedings, but said, that he seemed to resent her refusal in such a manner as frightened her; she hoped that after a few days' search he would think no more of her; and that she scrupled entering into the holy bands of matrimony, where her heart did not sincerely accompany all the words of the ceremony. Signora Diana had nothing to say in contradiction to this pious sentiment; and her brother applauded the honesty which could not be perverted by any interest whatever. She remained concealed in their house, where she helped in the kitchen, cleaned the rooms, and redoubled her usual diligence and officiousness. Her old master came to Louvere on pretence of adjusting a law-suit, three days after, and made private inquiry after her; but hearing from her mother and brother (who knew nothing of her being here) that they had never heard of her, he concluded she had taken another route, and returned to Bergamo; and she continued in this retirement near a fortnight.

Last Sunday, as soon as the day was closed, arrived at signor Aurelio's door, a handsome equipage in a large coach, attended by four well-armed servants on horseback. An old priest stepped out of it, and desiring to speak with signora Diana, informed her he came from the count Jeronimo Losi, to demand Octavia: that the count waited for her at a village four miles from hence, where he *intended* to marry her; and had sent him, who

engaged to perform the divine rite, that signora Diana might resign her to his care without any difficulty. The young damsel was called for, who entreated she might be permitted the company of another priest with whom she was acquainted: this was readily granted; and she sent for a young man that visits me very often, being remarkable for his sobriety and learning. Meanwhile a valet-de chambre presented her with a box, in which was a complete genteel undress for a lady. Her laced linen and fine night-gown were soon put on, and away they marched, leaving the family in a surprise not to be described.

Signor Aurelio came to drink coffee with me next morning: his first words were, he had brought me the History of Pamela. I said, laughing, I had been tired with it long since. He explained himself by relating this story, mixed with great resentment for Octavia's conduct. Count Jeronimo's father had been his ancient friend and patron; and this escape from his house (he said) would lay him under a suspicion of having abetted the young man's folly, and perhaps expose him to the anger of all his relations, for contriving an action he would rather have died than suffered, if he had known how to prevent it. I easily believed him, there appearing a latent jealousy under his affliction, that showed me he envied the bridegroom's happiness, at the same time that he condemned his extravagance.

Yesterday noon, being Saturday, Don Joseph returned, who has got the name of parson Williams by this expedition: he relates, that, when the bark which carried the coach and train arrived, they

found the amorous count waiting for his bride
the bank of the lake: he would have proceed
immediately to the church; but she utterly refus
it, till they had each of them been at confessio
after which the happy knot was tied by the pari
priest. They continued their journey, and came
their palace at Bergamo in a few hours, whe
every thing was prepared for their reception. Th
received the communion next morning, and t
count declares that the lovely Octavia has broug
him an inestimable portion, since he owes to h
the salvation of his soul. He has renounced pla
at which he had lost a great deal of time and m
ney. She has already retrenched several superfluo
servants, and put his family into an exact meth
of economy, preserving all the splendor necessa
to his rank. He has sent a letter in his own ha
to her mother, inviting her to reside with the
and subscribing himself her dutiful son: but t
countess has sent another privately by Don Josep
in which she advises the old woman to stay
Louvere, promising to take care she shall want n
thing, accompanied with a token of twenty sequins
which is at least nineteen more than ever she sa
in her life.

I forgot to tell you that from Octavia's fi
serving the old lady, there came frequent chariti
in her name to her poor parent, which nobody w
surprised at, the lady being celebrated for pio
works, and Octavia known to be a great favouri
with her. It is now discovered that they were
sent by the generous lover, who has presented D

* About ten guineas English.

Joseph very handsomely, but he has brought neither letter nor message to the house of Ardinghi, which affords much speculation.

I am afraid you are heartily tired with this tedious tale. I will not lengthen it with reflections, as I fancy yours will be the same as mine.

With mine all these adventures proceed from artifice on one side, and weakness on the other. An honest tender mind is often betrayed to ruin by the charms that make the fortune of a designing head, which, when joined with a beautiful face, can never fail of advancement, except barred by a wise mother who locks up her daughters from view till nobody cares to look on them. My poor friend, the duchess of Bolton,* was educated in solitude, with some choice of books, by a saint-like governess: crammed with virtue and good qualities, she thought it impossible not to find gratitude, though she failed to give passion; and upon this plan threw away her estate, was despised by her husband, and laughed at by the public. Polly,† bred in an ale-house, and produced on the stage, has obtained wealth and title, and found the way to be esteemed. So useful is early experience—without it, half of life is dissipated in correcting the errors that we have been taught to receive as indisputable truths.

I am ever your truly affectionate mother.

* Lady Anne Vaughan, daughter and heir of John earl of Carberry, married Charles, fifth duke of Bolton, in 1713, and died in 1751.

† Lavinia Fenton, the celebrated "Polly," in Gay's Beggar's Opera, afterward the second wife of Charles, third duke of Bolton.

LXII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Jan. 10, 1752.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM extremely concerned to hear you complain of ill health, at a time of life when you ought to be in the flower of your strength. I hope I need not recommend to you the care of it: the tenderness you have for your children is sufficient to enforce you to the utmost regard for the preservation of a life so necessary to their well being. I do not doubt your prudence in their education; neither can I say any thing particular relating to it at this distance, different tempers requiring different management. In general, never attempt to govern them (as most people do) by deceit: if they find themselves cheated, even in trifles, it will so far lessen the authority of their instructor, as to make them neglect all their future admonitions; and, possible, breed them free from prejudices: the contracted in the nursery often influence the whole life after, of which I have seen many melancholy examples. I shall say no more on this subject would have said this little if you had not asked advice: it is much easier to give rules than to tise them. I am sensible my own natural is too indulgent: I think it the least da error, yet still it is an error. I can only truth, that I do not know in my whole li ever endeavoured to impose on you, or

colour to any thing that I represented to you. If your daughters are inclined to love reading, do not check their inclination by hindering them of the diverting part of it; it is as necessary for the amusement of women as the reputation of men; but teach them not to expect or desire any applause from it. Let their brothers shine, and let them content themselves with making their lives easier by it, which I experimentally know is more effectually done by study than any other way. Ignorance is as much the fountain of vice as idleness, and indeed generally produces it. People that do not read or work for a livelihood have many hours they know not how to employ, especially women, who commonly fall into vapours, or something worse.

I am afraid you will think this letter very tedious: forgive it as coming from your most affectionate mother.

LXIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

1752.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yesterday, February 15, N. S. the case of books you were so good as to send me: the entertainment they have already given me has recompensed me for the long time I expected them. I began, by your direction, with Peregrine Pickle. I think lady Vane's Memoirs contain more truth and less malice than any I ever read in my life. When she speaks of her own being disinterested, I am apt

e really thinks herself so, as many
, after having no possibility of re-
character of honesty, please themselves
: character of being generous, because, whatever they
of being generous, they always spend at the next
he road, they are still as beggarly as ever. Her
se, and are still as beggarly as ever. Her
y, rightly considered, would be more in-
ctive to young women than any sermon I know.
ey may see there what mortifications and ra-
ety of misery are the unavoidable consequences of
gallantry. I think there is no rational creature that
would not prefer the life of the strictest Carmelite
to the round of hurry and misfortune she has gone
through. Her style is clear and concise, with some
strokes of humour, which appear to me so much
above her, I cannot help being of opinion, that the
whole has been modelled by the author of the book
to which it is inserted, who is some subaltern ad-
mirer of hers. I may judge wrong, she being no
acquaintance of mine, though she has married two
of my relations. Her first wedding was attended
with circumstances that made me think a visit not
at all necessary, though I disobliged lady Susan by
neglecting it; and her second, which happened
soon after made her so near a neighbour, that I
rather chose to stay the whole summer in town th
partake of her balls and parties of pleasure,
which I did not think it proper to introduce
and had no other way of avoiding it, withe
curring the censure of a most unnatural
for denying you diversions that the pi
Ferrers permitted to her exemplary
Mr. Shirley has had uncommon fortun
the conquest of two such extraordi

equal in th
nent abov
other for
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equal in their heroic contempt of shame, and eminent above their sex, the one for beauty, and the other for wealth, both which attract the pursuit of mankind, and have been thrown into his arms with the same unlimited fondness. He appeared to me gentle, well bred, well shaped, and sensible; but the charms of his face and eyes, which lady Vane describes with so much warmth, were, I confess, always invisible to me, and the artificial part of his character very glaring, which I think her story shows in a strong light.

The next book I laid my hand on was the Parish Girl, which interested me enough not to be able to quit it till it was read over, though the author has fallen into the common mistake of romance-writers, intending a virtuous character, and not knowing how to draw it; the first step of his heroine (leaving her patroness's house) being altogether absurd and ridiculous, justly entitling her to all the misfortunes she met with. Candles came, and my eyes grown weary, I took up the next book, merely because I supposed from the title it could not engage me long: it was Pompey the Little, which has really diverted me more than any of the others, and it was impossible to go to bed till it was finished. It is a real and exact representation of life, as it is now acted in London, as it was in my time, and as it will be (I do not doubt) a hundred years hence, with some little variation of dress, and perhaps of government. I found there many of my acquaintance. Lady T * * * and lady O * * * are so well painted, I fancied I heard them talk, and have heard them say the very things there repeated. I also saw myself (as I now am) in the character of

Mrs. Qualmsick. You will be surprised at this, no English woman being so free from vapours, having never in my life complained of low spirits and weak nerves; but our resemblance is very strong in the fancied loss of appetite, which I have been silly enough to be persuaded into by the physician of this place. He visits me frequently, as being one of the most considerable men in the parish, and is a grave, sober, thinking, great fool, whose solemn appearance, and deliberate way of delivering his sentiments, gives them an air of good sense, though they are often the most injudicious that ever were pronounced. By perpetual telling me I eat so little, he is amazed I am able to subsist. He had brought me to be of his opinion; and I began to be seriously uneasy at it. This useful treatise has roused me into a recollection of what I eat yesterday, and de almost every day the same. I wake generally abou seven, and drink half a pint of warm asses' mil after which I sleep two hours; as soon as I r risen, I constantly take three cups of milk cho and two hours after that a large cup of milk cof late: two hours more brings my dinner, whe never fail swallowing a good dish (I do not plate) of gravy soup, with all the bread, roots belonging to it. I then eat a wing and the body of a large fat capon, and a veal swee concluding with a competent quantity of c and some roasted chesnuts. At five in th noon I take another dose of asses' milk; supper twelve chesnuts (which would wei those in London), one new laid egg, an some porringer of white bread and m this diet, notwithstanding the menaces

doctor, I am now convinced I am in no danger of starving, and am obliged to Little Pompey for this discovery.

I opened my eyes this morning on Leonora, from which I defy the greatest chymist in morals to extract any instruction. The style is most affectedly florid, and naturally insipid, with such a confused heap of admirable characters, that never are, or can be, in human nature. I flung it aside after fifty pages, and laid hold of Mrs. Philips,* where I expected to find at least probable, if not true, facts, and was not disappointed. There is a great similitude in the genius and adventures (the one being productive of the other), between madam Constantia and lady Vane: the first mentioned has the advantage in birth, and, if I am not mistaken, in understanding: they have both had scandalous lawsuits with their husbands, and are endowed with the same intrepid assurance. Constantia seems to value herself also on her generosity, and has given the same proofs of it. The parallel might be drawn out to be as long as any of Plutarch's; but I dare swear you are already heartily weary of my remarks, and wish I had not read so much in so short a time, that you might not be troubled with my comments; but you must suffer me to say something of the polite Mr. S * * *, whose name I should never have guessed by the rapturous description his mistress makes of his person, having always looked upon him as one of the most disagreeable fellows about town, as odious in his outside as stupid in his conversation; and I should as

* Constantia Philips.

soon have expected to hear of his conquests at the head of an army, as among women; yet he has been, it seems, the darling favourite of the most experienced of the sex, which shows me I am a very bad judge of merit. But I agree with Mrs. Philips, that however profligate she may have been, she is infinitely his superior in virtue; and if her penitence is as sincere as she says, she may expect their future fate to be like that of Dives and Lazarus.

This letter is of a most immoderate length. It will find you at Caenwood: your solitude there will permit you to peruse, and even to forgive, all the impertinence of your most affectionate mother.

LXIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 23, N. S. 1756.

Soon after I wrote my last letter to my dear chil I was seized with so violent a fever, accompan with so many bad symptoms, my life was despai of by the physician of Gotolingo, and I prep myself for death with as much resignation as circumstance admits: some of my neighbours, out my knowledge, sent express for the doc this place, whom I have mentioned to you fo as having uncommon secrets. I was surpr see him at my bed-side. He declared me danger, but did not doubt my recovery, wholly under his care; and his first pre was transporting me hither: the other

asserted positively I should die on the road. It has always been my opinion that it is a matter of the utmost indifference where we expire, and I consented to be removed. My bed was placed on a brancard; my servants followed in chaises; and in this equipage I set out. I bore the first day's journey, of fifteen miles, without any visible alteration. The doctor said as I was not worse I was certainly better; and the next day proceeded twenty miles to Isco, which is at the head of this lake. I lay each night at noblemen's houses, which were empty. My cook, with my physician, always preceded two or three hours, and I found my chamber and all necessaries ready prepared with the exactest attention. I was put into a bark in my litter bed, and in three hours I arrived here. My spirits were not at all wasted (I think rather raised) by the fatigue of my journey. I drank the waters next morning, and, with a few doses of my physician's prescription, in three days found myself in perfect health, which appeared almost a miracle to all that saw me. You may imagine I am willing to submit to the orders of one that I must acknowledge the instrument of saving my life, though they are not entirely conformable to my will and pleasure. He has sentenced me to a long continuance here, which, he says, is absolutely necessary to the confirmation of my health, and would persuade me that my illness has been wholly owing to my omission of drinking the waters these two years past. I dare not contradict him, and must own he deserves (from the various surprising cures I have seen) the name given him in this country of the miraculous man. Both his character and practice are so sin-

gular, I cannot forbear giving you some account of them. He will not permit his patients to have either surgeon or apothecary: he performs all the operations of the first with great dexterity; and whatever compounds he gives, he makes in his own house: those are very few; the juice of herbs, and these waters, being commonly his sole prescriptions. He has very little learning, and professes drawing all his knowledge from experience, which he possesses, perhaps, in a greater degree than any other mortal, being the seventh doctor of his family, in a direct line. His forefathers have all of them left journals and registers, solely for the use of their posterity, none of them having published any thing; and he has recourse to these manuscripts on every difficult case, the veracity of which, at least, is unquestionable. His vivacity is prodigious, and he is indefatigable in his industry; but what most distinguishes him is a disinterestedness I never saw in any other: he is as regular in his attendance on the poorest peasant (from whom he never can receive one farthing) as on the richest of the nobility; and, whenever he is wanted, will climb three or four miles on the mountains, in the hottest sun, or heaviest rain, where a horse cannot go, to arrive at a cottage, where, if their condition requires it, he does not only give them advice and medicines gratis, but bread, wine, and whatever is needful. There never passes a week without one or more of these expeditions. His last visit is generally to me. I often see him as dirty and tired as a footpost, having eaten nothing all day but a roll or two that he carries in his pocket; yet blessed with such a *perpetual flow* of spirits, he is always gay, to a de-

gree above cheerfulness. There is a peculiarity in this character that I hope will incline you to forgive my drawing it.

I have already described to you this extraordinary spot of land, which is almost unknown to the rest of the world, and indeed does not seem to be destined by nature to be inhabited by human creatures, and I believe would never have been so without the cruel civil war between the Guelphs and Gibellines. Before that time here were only the huts of a few fishermen, who came at certain seasons on account of the fine fish with which this lake abounds, particularly trouts, as large and red as salmon. The lake itself is different from any other I ever saw or read of, being the colour of the sea, rather deeper tinged with green, which convinces me that the surrounding mountains are full of minerals; and it may be rich in mines yet undiscovered, as well as quarries of marble, from whence the churches and houses are ornamented, and even the streets paved, which, if polished and laid with art, would look like the finest mosaic work, being a variety of beautiful colours. I ought to retract the honourable title of street, none of them being broader than an alley, and impassable for any wheel carriage, except a wheelbarrow. This town, which is the largest of twenty-five that are built on the banks of the lake of Isco, is near two miles long, and the figure of a semicircle, and situated at the northern extremity. If it was a regular range of building it would appear magnificent; but, being founded accidentally by those who sought a refuge from the violences of those times, it is a mixture of shops and palaces, gardens and houses,

which ascend a mile high, in a confusion which is not disagreeable. After this salutary water was found, and the purity of the air experienced, many people of quality chose it for their summer residence, and embellished it with several fine edifices. It was populous and flourishing, till that fatal plague which overran all Europe in the year 1626. It made a terrible ravage in this place: the poor were almost destroyed, and the rich deserted it. Since that time it has never recovered its former splendor; few of the nobility returned: it is now only frequented during the water-drinking season. Several of the ancient palaces are degraded into lodging-houses, and others stand empty, in a ruinous condition: one of these I have bought. I see you lift up your eyes in wonder at my indiscretion. I beg you to hear my reasons before you condemn me. In my infirm state of health, the unavoidable noise of a public lodging is very disagreeable; and here is no private one: secondly, and chiefly, the whole purchase is but one hundred pounds, with a very pretty garden in terraces down to the water, and a court behind the house. It is founded on a rock, and the walls so thick, they will probably remain as long as the earth. It is true, the apartments are in most tattered circumstances, without doors or windows. The beauty of the great saloon gained my affection; it is forty-two feet in length by twenty-five, proportionably high, opening into a balcony of the same length, with a marble baluster: the ceiling and flooring are in good repair, but I have been forced to the expense of covering the wall with new stucco; and the carpenter is at this minute taking measure of the windows, in order to

make frames for sashes. The great stairs are in such a declining way, it would be a very hazardous exploit to mount them: I never intend to attempt it. The state bed-chamber shall also remain for the sole use of the spiders that have taken possession of it, along with the grand cabinet, and some other pieces of magnificence, quite useless to me, and which would cost a great deal to make habitable. I have fitted up six rooms, with lodgings for five servants, which are all I ever will have in this place; and I am persuaded that I could make a profit if I would part with my purchase, having been very much favoured in the sale, which was by auction, the owner having died without children; and I believe he had never seen this mansion in his life, it having stood empty from the death of his grandfather. The governor bid for me, and nobody would bid against him. Thus I am become a citizen of Louvere, to the great joy of the inhabitants, not (as they would pretend) from their respect for my person, but I perceive they fancy I shall attract all the travelling English; and, to say truth, the singularity of the place is well worth their curiosity; but, as I have no correspondents, I may be buried here thirty years, and nobody know any thing of the matter.

I received the books you were so kind to send me five days ago, but not the china, which I would not venture among the precipices that lead hither. I have only had time to read lord Orrery's work, which has extremely entertained, and not at all surprised me, having the honour of being acquainted with him; and know him for one of those danglers after wit, who, like those after beauty, spend their

time in humbly admiring, and are happy in being permitted to attend, though they are laughed at, and only encouraged to gratify the insatiate vanity of those professed wits and beautles who aim at being publicly distinguished in those characters. Dean Swift, by his lordship's own account, was so intoxicated with the love of flattery, that he sought it among the lowest of people and the silliest of women, and was never so well pleased with any companions as those that worshipped him while he insulted them. It is a wonderful condescension in a man of quality to offer his incense in such a crowd, and think it an honour to share a friendship with Sheridan,* &c. especially being himself endowed with such universal merit as he displays in these letters, where he shows that he is a poet, a patriot, a philosopher, a physician, a critic, a complete scholar, and most excellent moralist; shining in private life as a submissive son, a tender father, and zealous friend. His only error has been that love of learned ease, which he has indulged in a solitude which has prevented the world from being blessed with such a general, minister, or admiral, being equal to any of these employments, if he would have turned his talents to the use of the public. Heaven be praised, he has now drawn his pen in its service, and given an example to mankind, that the most villanous actions, nay, the most arrant nonsense, are only small blemishes in a great genius. I happen to think quite contrary, weak woman as I am. I have always avoided the con-

* Dr. Thomas Sheridan, the grandfather of R. Brinsley *Sheridan, esq.*

versation of those who endeavour to raise an opinion of their understanding by ridiculing what both law and decency obliges them to revere; but, whenever I have met with any of those bright spirits who would be smart on sacred subjects, I have ever cut short their discourse by asking them if they had any lights and revelations by which they would propose new articles of faith? Nobody can deny but religion is a comfort to the distressed, a cordial to the sick, and sometimes a restraint on the wicked; therefore, whoever would argue or laugh it out of the world, without giving some equivalent for it, ought to be treated as a common enemy: but, when this language comes from a churchman, who enjoys large benefices and dignities from that very church he openly despises, it is an object of horror for which I want a name, and can only be excused by madness, which I think the dean was always strongly touched with. His character seems to me a parallel with that of Caligula; and, had he had the same power, would have made the same use of it. That emperor erected a temple to himself, where he was his own high priest, preferred his horse to the highest honours in the state, professed enmity to the human race, and at last lost his life by a nasty jest on one of his inferiors, which I dare swear Swift would have made in his place. There can be no worse picture made of the doctor's morals than he has given us himself in the letters printed by Pope. We see him vain, trifling, ungrateful to the memory of his patron, that of lord Oxford, making a servile court where he had any interested views, and meanly abusive when they were disappointed, and as he says (in his own

phrase,) flying in the face of mankind, in
with his adorer Pope. It is pleasant to consider,
that, had it not been for the good nature of these
very mortals they contemn, these two superior
beings were entitled by their birth and hereditary
fortune to be only a couple of link-boys. I am of
opinion their friendship would have continued,
though they had remained in the same kingdom:
it had a very strong foundation—the love of flattery
on one side, and the love of money on the other.
Pope courted with the utmost assiduity all the old
men from whom he could hope a legacy, the duke
of Buckingham, lord Peterborough, sir G. Kneller,
lord Bolingbroke, Mr. Wycherly, Mr. Congreve,
lord Harcourt, &c. and I do not doubt projected to
sweep the dean's whole inheritance, if he could
have persuaded him to throw up his deanery, and
come to die in his house; and his general preach-
ing against money was meant to induce people to
throw it away, that he might pick it up. There
cannot be a stronger proof of his being capable of
any action for the sake of gain than publishing his
literary correspondence, which lays open such a
mixture of dulness and iniquity, that one would
imagine it visible even to his most passionate ad
mirers, if lord Orrery did not show that smoo
lines have as much influence over some people
the authority of the church in these countr
where it can not only excuse, but sanctify any
surdity or villany whatever. It is remarkable,
his lordship's family have been smatterers i
and learning for three generations: his grand
has left monuments of his good taste in
rhyming tragedies, and the romance of Part

His father began the world by giving his name to a treatise wrote by Atterbury and his club, which gained him great reputation ;* but (like sir Martin Marall, who would fumble with his lute when the music was over) he published soon after a sad comedy of his own, and, what was worse, a *dismal* tragedy he had found among the first earl of Orrery's papers. People could easier forgive his being partial to his own silly works, as a common frailty, than the want of judgment in producing a piece that dishonoured his father's memory.

Thus fell into dust a fame that had made a blaze by borrowed fire. To do justice to the present lord, I do not doubt this fine performance is all his own, and is a public benefit, if every reader has been as well diverted with it as myself. I verily believe it has contributed to the establishment of my health.

I have wrote two long letters to your father, to which I have had no answer. I hope he is well. The prosperity of you and yours is the warmest wish of,

My dear child,
Your most affectionate mother.

This letter is of a horrible length ; I dare not read it over. I should have told you (to justify my folly as far as I can), here is no ground-rent to be paid, taxes for church and poor, or any imposition whatever on houses. I desire in the next parcel

* This refers to the controversy between Mr. Boyle and Dr. Bentley, relative to the genuineness of the Epistles of Phalaris.

you would send me Lady Frail, the Adventures of G. Edwards, and the Life of Lord Stair, which I suppose very superficial, and partly fictitious; but as he was my acquaintance, I have some curiosity to see how he is represented.

LXV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, August 20, 1752.

MY DEAR CHILD,

IT is impossible to tell you to what degree I share with you in the misfortune that has happened. I do not doubt your own reason will suggest to you all the alleviations that can serve on so sad an occasion, and will not trouble you with the commonplace topics that are used, generally to no purpose, in letters of consolation. Disappointments ought to be less sensibly felt at my age than yours; yet I own I am so far affected by this, that I have need of all my philosophy to support it. However, let me beg of you not to indulge an useless grief, to the prejudice of your health, which is so necessary to your family. Every thing may turn out better than you expect. We see so darkly into futurity, we never know when we have real cause to rejoice or lament. The worst appearances have often happy consequences, as the best lead many times into the greatest misfortunes. Human prudence is very straitly bounded. What is most in our power, though little so, is the disposition of our own minds. Do not give way to melancholy; seek

amusements; be willing to be diverted, and insensibly you will become so. Weak people only place a merit in affliction. A grateful remembrance, and whatever honour we can pay to their memory, is all that is owing to the dead. Tears and sorrow are no duties to them, and make us incapable of those we owe to the living.

I give you thanks for your care of my books. I yet retain, and carefully cherish, my taste for reading. If relays of eyes were to be hired like post-horses, I would never admit any but silent companions: they afford a constant variety of entertainment, and is almost the only one pleasing in the enjoyment, and inoffensive in the consequence. I am sorry your sight will not permit you a great use of it: the prattle of your little ones, and friendship of lord Bute, will supply the place of it. My dear child, endeavour to raise your spirits; and believe this advice comes from the tenderness of your most affectionate mother.

LXVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Oct. 1, N. S. 1752.

I HAVE wrote five letters to my dear child, of which you have not acknowledged the receipt. I fear some, if not all of them, have miscarried, which may be attributed to sir J. Gray's leaving Venice. You must now direct (at last), recommended à Monsieur Smith, consul de S. M. B.

The first of those letters I mention spoke of lord

K * * *; the second had a story of lady O * * *; the third answered yours relating to the Miss Gunnings; the fourth gave an account of our cardinal; and the last enclosed a note upon Child. You need not excuse to me taking notice of your carpet. I think you have great reason to value yourself on the performance, but will have better luck than I have had if you can persuade any body else to do so. I could never get people to believe that I set a stitch, when I worked six hours in a day. You will confess my employments much more trifling than yours, when I own to you (between you and I), that my chief amusement is writing the history of my own time. It has been my fortune to have a more exact knowledge both of the persons and facts that have made the greatest figure in England in this age, than is common; and I take pleasure in putting together what I know, with an impartiality that is altogether unusual. Distance of time and place has totally blotted from my mind all traces either of resentment or prejudice; and I speak with the same indifference of the court of Great Britain as I should do of that of Augustus Cæsar. I hope you have not so ill opinion of me to think I am turning author in my old age. I can assure you I regularly burn every quire as soon as it is finished; and mean nothing more than to divert my solitary hours. I know mankind too well to think they are capable of receiving truth, much less of applauding it: or, were it otherwise, applause to me is as insignificant as garlands on the dead. I have no concern beyond my own family. Pray write as often as you can to your most affectionate mother.

LXVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Brescia, Oct. 10, 1752.

THIS letter will be very dull or very peevish; perhaps both. I am at present much out of humour, being on the edge of a quarrel with my friend and patron, the cardinal Quirini.* He is really a good-natured and generous man, and spends his vast revenue in (what he thinks) the service of his country, beside contributing largely to the building a new cathedral, which, when finished, will stand in the first rank of fine churches (where he has already the comfort of seeing his own busto, finely done within and without). He has founded a magnificent college for one hundred scholars, which I do not doubt he will endow very nobly, and greatly enlarged and embellished his episcopal palace. He has joined to it a public library, which, when I saw it, was a very beautiful room: it is now finished, furnished, and open twice in a week with proper attendance. Yesterday here arrived one of his chief chaplains, with a long compliment, which concluded with desiring I would send him my works; having dedicated one of his cases to English books,

* Cardinal Angelo Maria Quirini. He published the works of St. Ephrem Syrus, in six volumes folio, 1732; and the Life of Pope Paul II. quarto, 1740. See De Bure, Bibliographie Instructive, &c. For a full account of the cardinal, see the letter from Brescia, dated July 22, 1753.

he intended my labours should appear in the most conspicuous place. I was struck dumb for some time with this astonishing request: when I recovered my vexatious surprise (foreseeing the consequence), I made answer, I was highly sensible of the honour designed me, but, upon my word, I had never printed a single line in my life. I was answered in a cold tone, that his eminence could send for them to England, but they would be a long time coming, and with some hazard; and that he had flattered himself I would not refuse him such a favour, and I need not be ashamed of seeing my name in the collection where he admitted none but the most eminent authors. It was to no purpose to endeavour to convince him. He would not stay dinner, though earnestly invited; and went away with the air of one that thought he had reason to be offended. I know his master will have the same sentiments, and I shall pass in his opinion for a monster of ingratitude, while it is the blackest of vices in my opinion, and of which I am utterly incapable. I really could cry for vexation.

Sure nobody ever had such various provocations to print as myself. I have seen things I have wrote, so mangled and falsified, I have scarce known them. I have seen poems I never read, published with my name at length; and others, that were truly and singly wrote by me, printed under the names of others. I have made myself easy under all these mortifications, by the reflection I did not deserve them, having never aimed at the vanity of popular applause; but I own my philosophy is not proof against losing a friend, and it may be making an *enemy* of one to whom I am obliged.

I confess I have often been complimented, since I have been in Italy, on the books I have given the public. I used at first to deny it with some warmth; but, finding I persuaded nobody, I have of late contented myself with laughing whenever I heard it mentioned, knowing the character of a learned woman is far from being ridiculous in this country, the greatest families being proud of having produced female writers; and a Milanese lady* being now professor of mathematics in the university of Bologna, invited thither by a most obliging letter, wrote by the present pope,† who desired her to accept of the chair, not as a recompense for her merit, but to do honour to a town which is under his protection. To say truth, there is no part of the world where our sex is treated with so much contempt as in England. I do not complain of men for having engrossed the government: in excluding us from all degrees of power, they preserve us from many fatigues, many dangers, and perhaps many crimes. The small portion of authority that has fallen to my share (only over a few children and servants) has always been a burden, and never a pleasure; and I believe every one finds it so, who acts from a maxim (I think an indispensable duty) that whoever is under my power is under my protection. Those who find a joy in inflicting hardships, and seeing objects of misery, may have other

* Donna Maria Gaetana Agnesi was professor of mathematics and philosophy at Bologna. Her works, in two volumes, have been lately translated into English by J. Colson.

† Benedict XIV.

sensations; but I have always thought corrections, even when necessary, as painful to the giver as to the sufferer, and am therefore very well satisfied with the state of subjection we are placed in: but I think it the highest injustice to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, and that the same studies, which raise the character of a man, should hurt that of a woman. We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason; if some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must rest concealed, and be as useless to the world as gold in the mine. I am now speaking according to our English notions, which may wear out, some ages hence, along with others equally absurd. It appears to me the strongest proof of a clear understanding in Longinus (in every light acknowledged one of the greatest men among the ancients), when I find him so far superior to vulgar prejudices, as to choose his two examples of fine writing from a Jew (at that time the most despised people upon earth) and a woman. Our modern wits would be so far from quoting, they would scarce own they had read the works of such contemptible creatures, though perhaps they would condescend to steal from them, at the same time they declared they were below their notice. This subject is apt to run away with me; I will trouble you with no more of it.

LXVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Oct. 20, N. S. 1752.

DEAR CHILD,

READ over Richardson—he sinks horribly in his third volume (he does so in his story of Clarissa). When he talks of Italy, it is plain he is no better acquainted with it than he is with the kingdom of Mancomingo. He might have made his sir Charles's amour with Clementina begin in a convent, where the pensioners sometimes take great liberties; but that such familiarity should be permitted in her father's house, is as repugnant to custom, as it would be in London for a young lady of quality to dance on the ropes at Bartholomew fair: neither does his hero behave to her in a manner suitable to his nice notions. It was impossible a discerning man should not see her passion early enough to check it, if he had really designed it. His conduct puts me in mind of some ladies I have known, who could never find out a man to be in love with them, let him do or say what he would, till he made a direct attempt, and then they were so surprised I warrant you! Nor do I approve sir Charles's offered compromise (as he calls it). There must be a great indifference as to religion on both sides, to make so strict a union as marriage tolerable between people of such distinct persuasions. He seems to think women have no souls, by agreeing so easily that his daughters should be educated in bigotry and idolatry. You will per-

haps think this last a hard word; yet it is not difficult to prove, that either the papists are guilty of idolatry, or the pagans never were so. You may see, in Lucian (in his vindication of his images), that they did not take their statues to be real gods, but only the representations of them. The same doctrine may be found in Plutarch; and it is all the modern priests have to say in excuse for their worshipping wood and stone, though they cannot deny, at the same time, that the vulgar are apt to confound that distinction. I always, if possible, avoid controversial disputes: whenever I cannot do it, they are very short. I ask my adversary if he believes the Scripture; when that is answered affirmatively, their church may be proved, by a child of ten years old, contradictory to it, in their most important points. My second question is, if they think St. Peter and St. Paul knew the true Christian religion? The constant reply is, O yes. Then say I, purgatory, transubstantiation, invocation of saints, adoration of the virgin, relics (of which they might have had a cart load), and observation of Lent, is no part of it, since they neither taught nor practised any of these things. Vows of celibacy are not more contrary to nature, than to the positive precepts of St. Paul. He mentions a very common case, in which people are obliged, by conscience, to marry. No mortals can promise that case shall never be theirs, which depends on the disposition of the body as much as a fever; and it is as reasonable to engage never to feel the one as the other. He tells us, the marks of the Holy Spirit are charity, humility, truth, and long suffering. Can any thing *be more* uncharitable than damning eternally

many millions for not believing what they never heard? or prouder, than calling their head a vice-god? Pious frauds are avowedly permitted, and persecution applauded: these maxims cannot be dictated by the spirit of peace, which is so warmly preached in the Gospel. The creeds of the apostles, and council of Nice, do not speak of the mass, or real presence, as articles of belief; and Athanasius asserts, whosoever believes according to them shall be saved. Jesus Christ, in answer to the lawyer, bids him love God above all things, and his neighbour as himself, as all that is necessary to salvation. When he describes the last judgment, he does not examine what sect, or what church, men were of, but how far they had been beneficial to mankind. Faith cannot determine reward or punishment, being involuntary, and only the consequence of conviction: we do not believe what we please, but what appears to us with the face of truth. As I do not mistake exclamation, invective, or ridicule, for argument, I never recriminate on the lives of their popes and cardinals, when they urge the character of Henry the Eighth; I only answer, good actions are often done by ill men through interested motives; that it is the common method of Providence to bring good out of evil: history, both sacred and profane, publishes many examples of it. When they tell me that we forsook the worship of my ancestors, I say I have had more ancestors heathen than Christian, and my faith is certainly ancienter than theirs, and I have added nothing to the practice of the manners of professors of Christianity. As to the infallibility or extent of the dominion of their church, which cardinal Bellarmin counts among the proofs

of its orthodoxy, the Mahometans, who have larger empires, and have made a quicker progress, have a better plea for the visible protection of heaven. If the fopperies of their religion were only fopperies, they ought to be complied with, whenever it is established, like any ridiculous dress in fashion; but I think them impieties; their devotions are a scandal to humanity from their nonsense; the mercenary deceits and barbarous tyranny of their ecclesiastics, inconsistent with moral honesty. If they object to the diversity of our sects as a mark of reprobation, I desire them to consider that objection has equal force against Christianity in general. When they thunder with the names of fathers and councils, they are surprised to find me as well (often better) acquainted with them, than themselves. I show them the variety of their doctrines, their violent contests, and various factions, instead of that union they boast of. I have never been attacked a second time in any of the towns where I have resided, and perhaps shall never be so again after my last battle, which was with an old priest, a learned man, particularly esteemed as a mathematician, and who has a head and a heart as warm as poor Whiston's. When I first came hither, he visited me every day, and talked of me every where with such violent praise, that, had we been young people, God knows what would have been said. I have always the advantage of being quite calm on a subject which they cannot talk of without heat. He desired I would put on paper what I had said. I immediately wrote one side of a sheet, leaving the other *for his answer*. He carried it with him, promising *to bring it* the next day, since which time I have

never seen it, though I have often demanded it, being ashamed of my defective Italian. I fancy he sent it to his friend the archbishop of Milan. I have given over asking for it, as a desperate debt. He still visits me, but seldom, and in a cold sort of a way. When I found disputants I less respected, I have sometimes taken pleasure in raising their hopes by my concessions: they are charmed when I agree with them in the number of the sacraments; but are horridly disappointed when I explain myself by saying the word sacrament is not to be found either in the Old or New Testament; and one must be very ignorant not to know it is taken from the listing oath of the Roman soldiers, and means nothing more than a solemn, irrevocable engagement. Parents vow, in infant baptism, to educate their children in the Christian religion, which they take upon themselves by confirmation; the Lord's supper is frequently renewing the same oath. Ordination and matrimony are solemn vows of a different kind: confession includes a vow of revealing all we know, and reforming what is amiss: extreme unction, the last vow, that we have lived in the faith we were baptised: in this sense they are all sacraments. As to the mysteries preached since, they were all invented long after, and some of them repugnant to the primitive institution. This digression has carried me far from my criticism. You will laugh at my making any, on a work below examination. It may be of use to my grand-daughters. I am persuaded he is a favourite author in all the nurseries in England, and has done much harm in the boarding-schools, therefore ought to have his absurdities detected. You will think me angry with him for

repeating a saying of mine, accompanied wi
description of my person, which resembles me as
much as one of the giants in Guildhall, and plainly
shows he never saw me in his life. Indeed, I think,
after being so many years dead and buried, I might
be suffered to enjoy the right of the departed, and
rest in peace. I cannot guess how I can possibly
have incurred his indignation, except he takes for
truth the literary correspondence between me and
the Mrs. Argens, whom I never saw, and who, with
many high compliments, has attributed to me sen-
timents that never came into my head, and among
them a criticism on Pamela, who is, however, more
favourably treated than she deserves.

The book of letters I mention never came to my
hands till some time after it was printed, accident-
ally at Thoulouse. I have need of all my philo-
sophy on these occasions; though they happen so
often, I ought to be accustomed to them. When I
print, I submit to be answered and criticised; but
as I never did, it is hard to be abused for other
people's follies. A light thing said in gay company
should not be called upon for a serious defence, espe
cially when it injures nobody. It is certain ther
are as many marriages as ever. Richardson is
eager for the multiplication of them, I suppose
is some parish curate, whose chief profit depends
weddings and christenings. He is not a man-
wife; for he would be better skilled in physic
to think fits and madness any ornament to the
racters of his heroines. though this sir C
had no thoughts of marrying Clementina t
had lost her wits, and the divine Clarissa neve
prudently till she was in the same conditi

then very wisely desired to be carried to Bedlam, which is really all that is to be done in that case. Madness is as much a corporal distemper as the gout or asthma, never occasioned by affliction, or to be cured by the enjoyment of extravagant wishes. Passion may indeed bring on a fit, but the disease is lodged in the blood; and it is not more ridiculous to attempt to relieve the gout by an embroidered slipper, than to restore reason by the gratification of wild desires.

Richardson is as ignorant in morality as he is in anatomy, when he declares abusing an obliging husband or an indulgent parent, to be an innocent recreation. His Anna How and Charlotte Grandison are recommended as patterns of charming pleasantry, and applauded by his saint-like dames, who mistake folly for wit and humour, and impudence and ill nature for spirit and fire. Charlotte behaves like a humoursome child, and should have been used like one, and well whipped in the presence of her friendly confidante Harriet. Lord Halifax very justly tells his daughter, that a husband's kindness is to be received by a wife, even when he is drunk, and though it is wrapped up in never so much impertinence. Charlotte acts with an ingratitude that I think too black for human nature, with such coarse jokes and low expressions as are only to be heard among the lowest class of people. Women of that rank often plead a right to beat their husbands, when they do not cuckold them; and I believe this author was never admitted into higher company, and should confine his pen to the amours of housemaids, and the conversation at

the steward's table, where I imagine he has son
times intruded, though oftener in the servant's ha
yet, if the title be not a puff, this work has pas
three editions. I do not forgive him his c
respect of old china, which is below nobody's ta
since it has been the duke of Argyle's, whose u
derstanding has never been doubted either by
friends or enemies.

Richardson never had probably money enough
purchase any, or even a ticket for a masquera
which gives him such an aversion to them; thou
this intended satire against them is very absurd
the account of his Harriet, since she might h
been carried off in the same manner if she h
been going from supper with her grandame. H
whole behaviour, which he designs to be exe
plary, is equally blameable and ridiculous. S
follows the maxim of Clarissa, of declaring all
thinks to all the people she sees, without reflecti
that in this mortal state of imperfection, fig lea
are as necessary for our minds as our bodies, a
it is as indecent to show all we think as all
have. He has no idea of the manners of high li
his old lord M * * * talks in the style of a coun
justice, and his virtuous young ladies romp like
wenches round a may-pole. Such liberties as p
between Mr. Lovelace and his cousins, are not
be excused by the relation. I should have be
much astonished if lord Denbigh should have
fered to kiss me; and I dare swear lord Trenth
never attempted such an impertinence to you.

With all my contempt, I will take notice of c
good thing: I mean his project of an English n

nastery. It was a favourite scheme of mine when I was fifteen; and had I then been mistress of an independent fortune, would certainly have executed it, and elected myself lady abbess. There would you and your ten children have been lost for ever. Yet such was the disposition of my early youth: so much was I unlike those girls that declare, if they had been born of the male kind they should have been great rakes, which is owning they have strong inclinations to ——— and drinking, and want only opportunity and impunity to exert them vigorously.

This tedious miscellany of a letter is promised to be delivered into your own hand; nay, farther, that I shall have an account how you look, how you are dressed, and in what manner your room is furnished. Nothing relating to you is indifferent to me; and if the performance answers the engagement, it will be a vast pleasure to your most affectionate mother.

LXIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Padua, Oct. 20, 1752.

I AM much obliged to you, my dear child, for the concern you express for me in yours of July 10th, which I received yesterday, August 20th, but I can assure you I lose very little in not being visited by the English; boys and governors being commonly (not always) the worst company in the world. I am not otherwise affected by it, than as it has an ill appearance in a strange country, though hitherto I have not found any bad effect from it among my Venetian acquaintance. I was visited, two days ago, by my good friend cavalier Antonio Mocenigo, who came from Venice to present to me the elected husband of his brother's great grand-daughter, who is a noble Venetian (signor Zeno), just of her age, heir to a large fortune, and is one of the most agreeable figures I ever saw; not beautiful, but has an air of so much modesty and good sense, I easily believe all the good signor Antonio said of him. They came to invite me to the wedding. I could not refuse such a distinction, but hope to find some excuse before the solemnity, being unwilling to throw away money on fine clothes, which are as improper for me as an embroidered pall for a coffin. But I durst not mention age before my friend, who *told me that* he is eighty-six. I thought him forty

years younger; he has all his senses perfect, and is as lively as a man of thirty. It was very pleasing to see the affectionate respect of the young man, and the fond joy that the old one took in praising him. They would have persuaded me to return with them to Venice; I objected that my house was not ready to receive me; signor Antonio laughed, and asked if I did not think he could give me an apartment, (in truth it was very easy, having five palaces on a row, on the great canal, his own being the centre, and the others inhabited by his relations.) I was reduced to tell a fib, (God forgive me,) and pretend a pain in my head; promising to come to Venice before the marriage, which I really intend. They dined here; your health was the first drank; you may imagine I did not fail to toast the bride. She is yet in a convent, but is to be immediately released, and receive visits of congratulation on the contract, till the celebration of the church ceremony, which perhaps may not be these two months; during which time the lover makes a daily visit, and never comes without a present, which custom (at least sometimes) adds to the impatience of the bridegroom, and very much qualifies that of the lady. You would find it hard to believe a relation of the magnificence, not to say extravagance, on these occasions; indeed, it is the only one they are guilty of, their lives in general being spent in a regular handsome economy; the weddings and the creation of a procurator being the only occasions they have of displaying their wealth, which is very great in many houses, particularly this of Mocenigo, of which my

friend is the present head. I may justly call him so, giving me proofs of an attachment quite uncommon at London, and certainly disinterested, since I can no way possibly be of use to him. I could tell you some strong instances of it, if I did not remember you have not time to listen to my stories, and there is scarce room on my paper to assure you I am, my dear child,

Your most affectionate mother.

INDEX.

No.		Page
I.	To Mr. Wortley	5
II.	To Mr. Wortley	6
III.	To Mr. Wortley	7
IV.	To Mr. Wortley	9
V.	To Mr. Wortley	10
VI.	To Mr. Wortley	12
VII.	To Mr. Wortley	13
VIII.	To Mr. Wortley	15
IX.	To Mr. Wortley	17
X.	To Mr. Wortley	18
XI.	To Mr. Wortley	21
XII.	To Mr. Wortley	22
XIII.	To Mr. Wortley	23
XIV.	To Mr. Wortley	24
XV.	To Mr. Wortley	25
XVI.	To Mr. Wortley	26
XVII.	To Mr. Wortley	28
XVIII.	To Mr. Wortley	30
XIX.	To Mr. Wortley	31
XX.	To Mr. Wortley	33
XXI.	To Mr. Wortley	35
XXII.	To Mr. Wortley	37
XXIII.	To Mr. Wortley	38
XXIV.	To Mr. Wortley	39
XXV.	To Mr. Wortley	40
XXVI.	To Mr. Wortley	41
XXVII.	To Mr. Wortley	42
XXVIII.	To Mr. Wortley	43
XXIX.	To Mr. Wortley	45
XXX.	To Mr. Wortley	47
XXXI.	To Mr. Wortley	50
XXXII.	To Mr. Wortley	51
XXXIII.	To Mr. Wortley	53
XXXIV.	To Mr. Wortley	54

No.		Page
XXXV.	To Mr. Wortley	55
XXXVI.	To Mr. Wortley	57
XXXVII.	To the Countess of Bute	60
XXXVIII.	To Mr. Wortley	63
XXXIX.	To the Countess of Bute	65
XL.	To Mr. Wortley	67
XLI.	To Mr. Wortley	69
XLII.	To the Countess of Bute	70
XLIII.	To Mr. Wortley	72
XLIV.	To Mr. Wortley	74
XLV.	To the Countess of Bute	76
XLVI.	To the Countess of Bute	77
XLVII.	To the Countess of Bute	79
XLVIII.	To the Countess of Bute	80
XLIX.	To the Countess of Bute	85
L.	To the Countess of Bute	86
LI.	To the Countess of Bute	92
LII.	To Mr. Wortley	93
LIII.	To the Countess of Bute	94
LIV.	To the Countess of Bute	96
LV.	To the Countess of Bute	97
LVI.	To the Countess of Bute	100
LVII.	To Mr. Wortley	103
LVIII.	To the Countess of Bute	104
LIX.	To the Countess of Bute	106
LX.	To Mr. Wortley	108
LXI.	To the Countess of Bute	110
LXII.	To the Countess of Bute	118
LXIII.	To the Countess of Bute	119
LXIV.	To the Countess of Bute	124
LXV.	To the Countess of Bute	134
LXVI.	To the Countess of Bute	135
LXVII.	To the Countess of Bute	137
LXVIII.	To the Countess of Bute	141
LXIX.	To the Countess of Bute	150

END OF VOL. I.

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LETTERS
FROM
FRANCE AND ITALY.
BY
LADY M. W. MONTAGU.
VOL. II.



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LETTERS

FROM

FRANCE AND ITALY:

LXX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Jan. 28, N. S. 1753.

DEAR CHILD,

You have given me a great deal of satisfaction by your account of your eldest daughter. I am particularly pleased to hear she is a good arithmetician; it is the best proof of understanding: the knowledge of numbers is one of the chief distinctions between us and brutes. If there is any thing in blood, you may reasonably expect your children should be endowed with an uncommon share of good sense. Mr. Wortley's family and mine have both produced some of the greatest men that have been born in England: I mean admiral Sandwich, and my grandfather, who was distinguished by the name of Wise William.* I have heard lord Bute's

* William Pierrepont, second son of Robert earl of Kingston, died 1679, aged 71.

father mentioned as an extraordinary genius, though he had not many opportunities of showing it; and his uncle, the present duke of Argyle, has one of the best heads I ever knew. I will therefore speak to you as supposing lady * * * not only capable, but desirous of learning: in that case, by all means let her be indulged in it. You will tell me I did not make it a part of your education: your prospect was very different from hers. As you had much in your circumstances to attract the highest offers, it seemed your business to learn how to live in the world, as it is hers to know how to be easy out of it. It is the common error of builders and parents to follow some plan they think beautiful (and perhaps is so), without considering that nothing is beautiful which is displaced. Hence we see so many edifices raised, that the raisers can never inhabit, being too large for their fortunes. Vistos are laid open over barren heaths, and apartments contrived for a coolness very agreeable in Italy, but killing in the north of Britain: thus every woman endeavours to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she will never appear, and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety o company, if she can be amused with an author i her closet. To render this amusement complet she should be permitted to learn the languages. *have heard* it lamented that boys lose so m

years in mere learning of words: this is no objection to a girl, whose time is not so precious: she cannot advance herself in any profession, and has therefore more hours to spare; and as you say her memory is good, she will be very agreeably employed this way. There are two cautions to be given on this subject: first, not to think herself learned, when she can read Latin, or even Greek. Languages are more properly to be called vehicles of learning than learning itself, as may be observed in many schoolmasters, who, though perhaps critics in grammar, are the most ignorant fellows upon earth. True knowledge consists in knowing things, not words. I would no farther wish her a linguist than to enable her to read books in their originals, that are often corrupted, and are always injured by translations. Two hours application every morning will bring this about much sooner than you can imagine, and she will have leisure enough beside, to run over the English poetry, which is a more important part of a woman's education than it is generally supposed. Many a young damsel has been ruined by a fine copy of verses, which she would have laughed at if she had known it had been stolen from Mr. Waller. I remember, when I was a girl, I saved one of my companions from destruction, who communicated to me an epistle she was quite charmed with. As she had naturally a good taste, she observed the lines were not so smooth as Prior's or Pope's, but had more thought and spirit than any of theirs. She was wonderfully delighted with such a demonstration of her lover's sense and passion, and not a little pleased with her own charms, that had force enough

to inspire such elegancies. In the midst of this triumph, I showed her that they were taken from Randolph's poems, and the unfortunate transcriber was dismissed with the scorn he deserved. To say truth, the poor plagiary was very unlucky to fall into my hands; that author being no longer in fashion, would have escaped any one of less universal reading than myself. You should encourage your daughter to talk over with you what she reads; and, as you are very capable of distinguishing, take care she does not mistake pert folly for wit and humour, or rhyme for poetry, which are the common errors of young people, and have a train of ill consequences. The second caution to be given her (and which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness: the parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy, and consequently the most inveterate hatred, of all he and she fools, which will certainly be at least three parts in four of her acquaintance. The use of knowledge in our sex, beside the amusement of solitude, is to moderate the passions, and learn to be contented with a small expense, which are the certain effects of a studious life; and it may be preferable even to that fame which men have engrossed to themselves, and will not suffer us to share. You will tell me I have not observed this rule myself; but you are mistaken: it is only inevitable accident that has given me any reputation that way. I have always carefully avoided it, and ever thought it a misfortune. The explanation of this paragraph would occasion a long digression, *which I will* not trouble you with, it being my pre-

sent design only to say what I think useful for the instruction of my grand-daughter, which I have much at heart. If she has the same inclination (I should say passion) for learning that I was born with, history, geography, and philosophy, will furnish her with materials to pass away cheerfully a longer life than is allotted to mortals. I believe there are few heads capable of making sir Isaac Newton's calculations, but the result of them is not difficult to be understood by a moderate capacity. Do not fear this should make her affect the character of lady * * *, or lady * * *, or Mrs. * * *: those women are ridiculous, not because they have learning, but because they have it not. One thinks herself a complete historian, after reading Echard's Roman history; another a profound philosopher, having got by heart some of Pope's *unintelligible* essays; and a third an able divine, on the strength of Whitfield's sermons: thus you hear them screaming politics and controversy.

It is a saying of Thucydides, that ignorance is bold, and knowledge reserved. Indeed it is impossible to be far advanced in it, without being more humbled by a conviction of human ignorance than elated by learning. At the same time I recommend books, I neither exclude work nor drawing. I think it as scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle, as for a man not to know how to use a sword. I was once extremely fond of my pencil, and it was a great mortification to me when my father turned off my master, having made a considerable progress for the short time I learned. My over eagerness in the pursuit of it had brought a

weakness in my eyes, that made it necessary to leave off; and all the advantage I got was the improvement of my hand. I see, by hers, that practice will make her a ready writer: she may attain it by serving you for a secretary, when your health or affairs make it troublesome to you to write yourself; and custom will make it an agreeable amusement to her. She cannot have too many for that station of life which will probably be her fate. The ultimate end of your education was to make you a good wife (and I have the comfort to hear that you are one); hers ought to be, to make her happy in a virgin state. I will not say it is happier; but it is undoubtedly safer than any marriage. In a lottery, where there is (at the lowest computation) ten thousand blanks to a prize, it is the most prudent choice not to venture. I have always been so thoroughly persuaded of this truth, that, notwithstanding the flattering views I had for you, (as I never intended you a sacrifice to my vanity), I thought I owed you the justice to lay before you all the hazards attending matrimony: you may recollect I did so in the strongest manner. Perhaps you may have more success in the instructing your daughter: she has so much company at home, she will not need seeking it abroad, and will more readily take the notions you think fit to give her. As you were alone in my family, it would have been thought a great cruelty to suffer you no companions of your own age, especially having so many near relations, and I do not wonder their opinions influenced yours. I was not sorry to see you not determined on a single life, knowing it was not your father's

intention, and contented myself with endeavouring to make your home so easy, that you might not be in haste to leave it.

I am afraid you will think this a very long insignificant letter. I hope the kindness of the design will excuse it, being willing to give you every proof in my power that I am

Your most affectionate mother.

LXXI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Feb. 19, N. S. 1753.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I GAVE you some general thoughts on the education of your children in my last letter: but fearing you should think I neglected your request, by answering it with too much conciseness, I am resolved to add to it what little I know on that subject, and which may perhaps be useful to you in a concern, with which you seem so nearly affected.

People commonly educate their children as they build their houses, according to some plan they think beautiful, without considering whether it is suited to the purposes for which they are designed. Almost all girls of quality are educated as if they were to be great ladies, which is often as little to be expected, as an immoderate heat of the sun in the north of Scotland. You should teach yours to confine their desires to probabilities, to be as useful as is possible to themselves, and to think privacy (as it is) the happiest state of life. I do not

doubt your giving them all the instructions ne
sary to form them to a virtuous life; but it
fatal mistake to do this, without proper restrict
Vices are often hid under the name of virtues,
the practice of them followed by the worst of
sequences. Sincerity, friendship, piety, disin
estedness, and generosity, are all great virtues;
pursued without discretion, become criminal
have seen ladies indulge their own ill-humou
being very rude and impertinent, and think
deserved approbation, by saying I love to speak t
One of your acquaintances made a ball the nex
after her mother died, to show she was sincere
believe your own reflection will furnish you
but too many examples of the ill effects of the
of the sentiments I have mentioned, when
warmly embraced. They are generally recomm
ed to young people without limits or distinc
and this prejudice hurries them into great mi
tunes, while they are applauding themselves in
noble practice (as they fancy) of very eminent
tues.

I cannot help adding (out of my real affectio
you) that I wish you would moderate that fond
you have for your children. I do not mean
should abate any part of your care, or not do
duty to them in its utmost extent; but I w
have you early prepare yourself for disappointm
which are heavy in proportion to their being
prising. It is hardly possible, in such a num
that none should be unhappy; prepare you
against a misfortune of that kind. I confess t
is hardly any more difficult to support; yet,
certain, imagination has a great share in the

of it, and it is more in our power than it is commonly believed, to soften whatever ills are founded or augmented by fancy. Strictly speaking, there is but one real evil, I mean, acute pain; all other complaints are so considerably diminished by time, that it is plain the grief is owing to our passion, since the sensation of it vanishes when that is over.

There is another mistake, I forgot to mention, usual in mothers: if any of their daughters are beauties, they take great pains to persuade them that they are ugly, or at least that they think so, which the young woman never fails to believe springs from envy, and is perhaps not much in the wrong. I would, if possible, give them a just notion of their figure, and show them how far it is valuable. Every advantage has its price, and may be either over or under-valued. It is the common doctrine of (what are called) good books, to inspire a contempt of beauty, riches, greatness, &c. which has done as much mischief among the young of our sex as an over eager desire of them. Why they should not look on those things as blessings where they are bestowed, though not necessaries that it is impossible to be happy without, I cannot conceive. I am persuaded the ruin of lady * * * * was in a great measure owing to the notions given her by the good people that had the care of her. It is true, her circumstances and your daughters' are very different; they should be taught to be content with privacy, and yet not neglect good fortune, if it should be offered them.

I am afraid I have tired you with my instructions. I do not give them as believing my age has furnished me with superior wisdom, but in compliance with

your desire, and being fond of every opportunity that gives a proof of the tenderness with which I am ever

Your affectionate mother.

I should be glad if you sent me the third volume of Campbell's Architecture, and with it any other entertaining books. I have seen the duchess of Marlborough's Memoirs, but should be glad of the Apology for a late resignation. As to the ale, it is now so late in the year, it is impossible it should come good. You do not mention your father; my last letter from him told me he intended soon for England.

LXXII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, March 6, 1753.

I CANNOT help writing a sort of apology for my last letter, foreseeing that you will think it wrong, or at least lord Bute will be extremely shocked, at the proposal of a learned education for daughters, which the generality of men believe to be as great a profanation, as the clergy would do if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood. I desire you would take notice, I would not have learning enjoined them as a task, but permitted as a pleasure, if their genius leads them naturally to it. I look upon my grand-daughters as a sort of lay nuns: destiny may have laid up other things for them, but they have no reason to expect to pass *their time* otherwise than their aunts do at pre-

sent; and I know, by experience, it is in the power of study not only to make solitude tolerable, but agreeable. I have now lived almost seven years in a stricter retirement than yours in the isle of Bute, and can assure you I have never had half an hour heavy on my hands, for want of something to do. Whoever will cultivate their own mind will find full employment. Every virtue does not only require great care in the planting, but as much daily solicitude in cherishing, as exotic fruits and flowers. The vices and passions (which I am afraid are the natural product of the soil) demand perpetual weeding. Add to this, the search after knowledge, every branch of which is entertaining, and the longest life is too short for the pursuit of it; which, though in some regard confined to very strait limits, leaves still a vast variety of amusements to those capable of tasting them, which is utterly impossible to be attained by those that are blinded by prejudice, the certain effect of an ignorant education. My own was one of the worst in the world, being exactly the same as Clarissa Harlow's; her pious Mrs. Norton so perfectly resembling my governess, who had been nurse to my mother, I could almost fancy the author was acquainted with her. She took so much pains, from my infancy, to fill my head with superstitious tales and false notions, it was none of her fault, that I am not at this day afraid of witches and hobgoblins, or turned methodist. Almost all girls are bred after this manner. I believe you are the only woman (perhaps I might say person) that never was either frighted or cheated into any thing by your parents. I can truly affirm, I never deceived any body in my life, ex-

cepting (which I confess has often happened undesigned) by speaking plainly, as earl Stanhope used to say (during his ministry) he always imposed on the foreign ministers by telling them the naked truth, which, as they thought *impossible* to come from the mouth of a statesman,* they never failed to write information to their respective courts directly contrary to the assurances he gave them. Most people confound the ideas of sense and cunning, though there are really no two things in nature more opposite: it is in part from this false reasoning the unjust custom prevails of debarring our sex from the advantages of learning, the men fancying the improvement of our understandings would only furnish us with more art to deceive them, which is directly contrary to the truth. Fools are always enterprising, not seeing the difficulties of deceit, or the ill consequences of detection. I could give many examples of ladies whose ill conduct has been very notorious, which has been owing to that ignorance, which has exposed them to idleness, which is justly called the mother of mischief. There is nothing so like the education of a woman of quality as that of a prince: they are taught to dance, and the exterior part of what is called good breeding, which, if they attain, they are extraordinary creatures in their kind, and have all the accomplishments required by their directors. The same characters are formed by the same lessons, which inclines me to think (if I dare say it) that nature has not placed us in an inferior rank to men, no more than the females of other animals, where

* This state maxim (according to Isaac Walton) had been *previously* adopted by sir Henry Wotton.

we see no distinction of capacity; though I am persuaded, if there was a commonwealth of rational horses, (as doctor Swift has supposed), it would be an established maxim among them, that a mare could *not* be taught to pace. I could add a great deal on this subject, but I am not now endeavouring to remove the prejudices of mankind: my only design is to point out to my grand-daughters the method of being contented with that retreat, to which unforeseen circumstances may oblige them, and which is perhaps preferable to all the show of public life. It has always been my inclination: Lady Stafford (who knew me better than any body else in the world, both from her own just discernment, and my heart being ever as open to her as myself) used to tell me, my true vocation was a monastery: and I now find, by experience, more sincere pleasures with my books and garden, than all the flutter of a court could give me.

If you follow my advice in relation to lady * * *, my correspondence may be of use to her; and I shall very willingly give her those instructions that may be necessary in the pursuit of her studies. Before her age I was in the most regular commerce with my grandmother, though the difference of our time of life was much greater, she being past forty-five when she married my grandfather. She died at ninety-six, retaining to the last the vivacity and clearness of her understanding, which was very uncommon. You cannot remember her, being then in your nurse's arms. I conclude with repeating to you, I only recommend, but am far from commanding, which I think I have no right to do. I tell you my sentiments, because you desired to know them.

and hope you will receive them with some partiality, as coming from

Your most affectionate mother.

LXXIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, March 16, N. S. 1753.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of December 20th, this morning, which gave me great pleasure, by the account of your good health, and that of your father. I know nothing else could give me any at present, being sincerely afflicted for the death of the doge.* He is lamented here by all ranks of people, as their common parent. He really answered the idea of lord Bolingbroke's imaginary patriotic prince, and was the only example I ever knew of having passed through the greatest employments, and most important negociations, without ever making an enemy. When I was at Venice, which was some months before his election, he was the leading voice in the senate, which would have been dangerous in the hands of a bad man: yet he had the art to silence envy; and I never once heard an objection to his character, or even an insinuation to his disadvantage. I attribute this peculiar happiness to be owing to the sincere benevolence of his heart, joined with an easy cheerfulness of temper, which made him agree-

* Pietro Grimani died 1752. He was elected doge of Venice in 1741, and was succeeded by Francesco Loredano.

able to all companies, and a blessing to all his dependants. Authority appeared so humble in him, no one wished it less, except himself, who would sometimes lament the weight of it, as robbing him too much of the conversation of his friends, in which he placed his chief delight; being so little ambitious, that, to my certain knowledge, far from caballing to gain that elevation to which he was raised, he would have refused it, if he had not looked upon the acceptation of it as a duty due to his country. This is only speaking of him in the public light. As to myself, he always professed, and gave me every demonstration of the most cordial friendship. Indeed, I received every good office from him I could have expected from a tender father, or a kind brother; and though I have not seen him since my last return to Italy, he never omitted an opportunity of expressing the greatest regard for me, both in his discourse to others, and upon all occasions, where he thought he could be useful to me. I do not doubt that I shall very sensibly miss the influence of his good intentions.

You will think I dwell too long on this melancholy subject. I will turn to one widely different, in taking notice of the dress of you London ladies, who I find take up the Italian fashion of going in the hair; it is here only the custom of the peasants, and the unmarried women of quality, except in the heat of summer, when any cap would be almost insupportable. I have often smiled to myself in viewing our assemblies (which they call conversations) at Louvere; the gentlemen being all in light night-caps and night-gowns (under which I am informed they wear no breeches) and slippers, and the ladies in

their stays and smock sleeves, tied with ribands, and a single latestring petticoat: there is not a hat or a hoop to be seen. It is true this dress is called *vestimenti di confidenza*, and they do not appear in it in town, but in their own chambers, and that only during the summer months.

My paper admonishes me to conclude, by assuring you that I am ever your most affectionate mother.

LXXIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, May 2, 1753.

I GIVE you thanks, dear child, for the entertaining account of your present diversions. I find the public calamities have no influence on the pleasures of the town. I remember very well the play of the Revenge, having been once acquainted with a party that intended to represent it, not one of whom is now alive. I wish you had told me who acted the principal parts. I suppose lord Bute was Alonzo, by the magnificence of his dress. I think they have mended their choice in the Orphan: I saw it played at Westminster-school, where lord Erskine was Monimia, and then one of the most beautiful figures that could be seen. I have had here (in low life) some amusements of the same sort. I believe I wrote you word I intended to go to the opera at Brescia; but the weather being cold, and the roads bad, prevented my journey; and the people of this village (which is the largest I know: the curate tells *me he* has two thousand communicants) presented

me a petition for leave to erect a theatre in my saloon. This house had stood empty many years before I took it, and they were accustomed to turn the stables into a play-house every carnival; it is now occupied by my horses, and they had no other place proper for a stage. I easily complied with their request, and was surprised at the beauty of their scenes, which, though painted by a country painter, are better coloured, and the prospective better managed, than in any of the second-rate theatres in London. I liked it so well, it is not yet pulled down. The performance was yet more surprising, the actors being all peasants; but the Italians have so natural a genius for comedy, they acted as well as if they had been brought up to nothing else, particularly the *arlequino*, who far surpassed any of our English, though only the tailor of the village, and I am assured never saw a play in any other place. It is pity they have not better poets, the pieces being not at all superior to our drolls. The music, habits, and illumination were at the expense of the parish; and the whole entertainment, which lasted the three days of the carnival, cost me only a barrel of wine, which I gave the actors, and is not so dear as small beer in London. At present, as the old song says—

All my whole care
Is my farming affair,
To make my corn grow, and my apple-trees bear.

My improvements give me great pleasure, and so much profit, that, if I could live a hundred years longer, I should certainly provide for all my grandchildren: but, alas! as the Italians say, *ha sonato*

venti-quatro 'ora : and it is not long I must expect to write myself your most affectionate mother.

LXXV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 3, N. S. 1753.

MY DEAR CHILD,

You see I was not mistaken in supposing we should have disputes concerning your daughters if we were together, since we can differ even at this distance. The sort of learning that I recommended is not so expensive, either of time or money, as dancing, and, in my opinion, likely to be of much more use to lady * * *, if her memory and apprehension are what you represented them to me. However, every one has a right to educate their children after their own way, and I shall speak no more on that subject. I was so much pleased with the character you gave her, that, had there been any possibility of her undertaking so long a journey, I should certainly have asked for her; and I think, out of such a number, you might have spared her. I own my affection prevailed over my judgment in this thought, since nothing can be more imprudent than undertaking the management of another's child. I verily believe, that, had I carried six daughters out of England with me, I could have disposed of them all advantageously. The winter I passed at Rome there was an unusual concourse of English, many of them with great estates, and

their own masters: as they had no admittance to the Roman ladies, nor understood the language, they had no way of passing their evenings but in my apartment, where I had always a full drawing-room. Their governors encouraged their assiduities as much as they could, finding I gave them lessons of economy and good conduct; and my authority was so great, it was a common threat amongst them, I will tell lady Mary what you say. I was judge of all their disputes, and my decisions always submitted to. While I stayed, there was neither gaming, drinking, quarrelling, or keeping. The abbé Grant (a very honest, good-natured North Briton, who has resided several years at Rome) was so much amazed at this uncommon regularity, he would have made me believe I was bound in conscience to pass my life there, for the good of my countrymen. I can assure you my vanity was not at all raised by this influence over them, knowing very well that had lady Charlotte de Roussi been in my place, it would have been the same thing. There is that general emulation in mankind, I am fully persuaded, if a dozen young fellows bred a bear amongst them, and saw no other creature, they would every day fall out for the bear's favours, and be extremely flattered by any mark of distinction shown by that ugly animal. Since my last return to Italy, which is now near seven years, I have lived in a solitude not unlike that of Robinson Crusoe, excepting my short trips to Louvere: my whole time is spent in my closet and garden, without regretting any conversation but that of my own family. The study of simples is a new amusement to me. I have no correspondence with any body at

London but yourself and your father, whom I have not heard from a long time. My best wishes attend you and yours, being, with great truth, your most affectionate mother.

LXXVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 10, N. S. 1753.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of May the 12th but yesterday, July the 9th. I am surprised you complain of my silence. I have never failed answering yours the post after I received them; but I fear, being directed to Twickenham (having no other direction from you), your servants there may have neglected them. I have been these six weeks, and still am, at my dairy-house, which joins to my garden. I believe I have already told you it is a long mile from the castle, which is situate in the midst of a very large village, once a considerable town, part of the walls still remaining, and has not vacant ground enough about it to make a garden, which is my greatest amusement, it being now troublesome to walk, or even go in the chaise till the evening. I have fitted up in this farm-house a room for myself, that is to say, strewed the floor with rushes, covered the chimney with moss and branches, and adorned the room with basins of earthenware (which is made here to great perfection) filled with flowers, and put in some straw chairs, and a *couch* bed, which is my whole furniture. This spot

of ground is so beautiful, I am afraid you will scarce credit the description, which, however, I can assure you, shall be very literal, without any embellishment from imagination. It is on a bank, forming a kind of peninsula, raised from the river Oglio fifty feet, to which you may descend by easy stairs cut in the turf, and either take the air on the river, which is as large as the Thames at Richmond, or, by walking an avenue two hundred yards on the side of it, you find a wood of a hundred acres, which was all ready cut into walks and ridings when I took it. I have only added fifteen bowers in different views, with seats of turf. They were easily made, here being a large quantity of underwood, and a great number of wild vines, which twist to the top of the highest trees, and from which they make a very good sort of wine they call *brusco*. I am now writing to you in one of these arbours, which is so thick shaded, the sun is not troublesome, even at noon. Another is on the side of the river, where I have made a camp kitchen, that I may take the fish, dress, and eat it immediately, and at the same time see the barks, which ascend or descend every day to or from Mantua, Guastalla, or Pont de Vie, all considerable towns. This little wood is carpeted, in their succeeding seasons, with violets and strawberries, inhabited by a nation of nightingales, and filled with game of all kinds, excepting deer and wild boar, the first being unknown here, and it not being large enough for the other.

My garden was a plain vineyard when it came into my hands, not two years ago, and it is, with a small expense, turned into a garden that (apart

from the advantage of the climate) I like better than that of Kensington. The Italian vineyards are not planted like those in France, but in clumps, fastened to trees planted in equal ranks (commonly fruit trees), and continued in festoons from one to another, which I have turned into covered galleries of shade, that I can walk in the heat without being incommoded by it. I have made a dining-room of verdure capable of holding a table of twenty covers: the whole ground is three hundred and seventeen feet in length, and two hundred in breadth. You see it is far from large; but so prettily disposed (though I say it), that I never saw a more agreeable rustic garden, abounding with all sorts of fruit, and producing a variety of wines. I would send you a pipe, if I did not fear the customs would make you pay too dear for it. I believe my description gives you but an imperfect idea of my garden. Perhaps I shall succeed better in describing my manner of life, which is as regular as that of any monastery. I generally rise at six; and, as soon as I have breakfasted, put myself at the head of my needlewomen, and work with them till nine. I then inspect my dairy, and take a turn among my poultry, which is a very large inquiry. I have, at present, two hundred chickens, besides turkeys, geese, ducks, and peacocks. All things have hitherto prospered under my care: my bees and silk-worms are doubled; and I am told that, without accidents, my capital will be so in two years time. At eleven o'clock I retire to my books: I dare not indulge myself in that pleasure above an hour. At twelve I constantly dine, and sleep after dinner till about three. I then send for some of

my old priests, and either play at piquet or whist till it is cool enough to go out. One evening I walk in my wood, where I often sup, take the air on horseback the next, and go on the water the third. The fishery of this part of the river belongs to me; and my fisherman's little boat (to which I have a green lutestring awning) serves me for a barge. He and his son are my rowers, without any expense, he being very well paid by the profit of the fish, which I give him on condition of having every day one dish for my table. Here is plenty of every sort of fresh water fish, excepting salmon; but we have a large trout so like it, that I, who have almost forgot the taste, do not distinguish it.

We are both placed properly in regard to our different times of life: you amidst the fair, the gallant, and the gay; I in a retreat where I enjoy every amusement that solitude can afford. I confess I sometimes wish for a little conversation; but I reflect that the commerce of the world gives more uneasiness than pleasure, and quiet is all the hope that can reasonably be indulged at my age.

My letter is of an unconscionable length: I should ask your pardon for it, but I had a mind to give you an idea of my mode of passing my time. Take it as an instance of the affection of, dear child,

Your most affectionate mother.

LXXVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 23, N. S. 17

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE just received two letters from you, th the dates are a month distant. The death of * * * naturally raises the mortifying reflectio how slender a thread hangs all worldly prospe I cannot say I am otherwise much touched at is true she was my sister, as it were, and in sense; but her behaviour to me never gave m love, nor her general conduct any esteem. I c cannot forgive her dishonouring her family b marriage: it may be you will call this an fashioned way of thinking. The confounding ranks, and making a jest of order, has long growing in England; and I perceive, by the b you sent me, has made a very considerable gress. The heroes and heroines of the age cobblers and kitchen-wenches. Perhaps you say, I should not take my ideas of the manne the times from such trifling authors; but it is truly to be found among them than from any torian: as they write merely to get money, always fall into the notions that are most ac able to the present taste. It has long been th deavour of our English writers to represent p of quality as the vilest and silliest part of th tion, being generally very low-born themselve am not surprised at their propagating this

trine; but I am much mistaken if this levelling principle does not, one day or other, break out in fatal consequences to the public, as it has already done in many private families. You will think I am influenced by living under an aristocratic government, where distinction of rank is carried to a very great height; but I can assure you my opinion is founded on reflection and experience; and I wish to God I had always thought in the same manner, though I had ever the utmost contempt for misalliances; yet the silly prejudices of my education had taught me to believe that I was to treat nobody as an inferior, and that poverty was a degree of merit. This imaginary humility has made me admit many a familiar acquaintance, of every one of which I have heartily repented; and the greatest examples I have known of honour and integrity have been among those of the highest birth and fortunes. There are many reasons why it should be so, which I will not trouble you with. If my letter was to be published, I know I should be railed at for pride, and called an enemy of the poor; but I take a pleasure in telling you my real thoughts. I would willingly establish the most intimate friendship between us, and I am sure no proof of it shall ever be wanting on my side. I am sorry for the untimely death of poor lord C***ry; he had certainly a very good heart: I have often thought it a great pity it was not under the direction of a better head. I had lost his favour some time before I left England on a pleasant account. He came to me one morning with a hat full of paper, which he desired me to peruse, and tell him my sincere opinion: I trembled at the proposition,

foreseeing the inevitable consequence of this
fidence. However, I was not so barbarous a
tell him that his verses were extremely stupid
God knows they were), and that he was no
inspired with the spirit of poetry than that of
phecy. I contented myself with representin
him, in the mildest terms, that it was not
business of a man of quality to turn author,
that he should confine himself to the applau
his friends, and by no means venture on the p
He seemed to take this advice with good hum
promised to follow it, and we parted without
dispute; but, alas! he could not help showin
performance to better judges, who, with
usual candour and good-nature, earnestly exh
him to oblige the world with this instructive p
which was soon after published, and had the
cess I expected from it. Pope persuaded him,
soul! that my declaiming against it occasione
ill reception it met with, though this is the
time I ever mentioned it in my life; and I di
so much as guess the reason I heard of hi
more, till a few days before I left London.
cidentally said to one of his acquaintance tha
visits to me were at an end, I knew not why;
I was let into this weighty secret. My jo
prevented all explanation between us, and per
I should not have thought it worth any if I
stayed. I am not surprised he has left nothi
the duchess of Q****y, knowing he had no
for her, though I never heard him name her
he was of that species of mankind, who, wit
designing it, discover all they think to any
server that converses with them. His desi

fixing his name to a certain quantity of wall, is one instance, among thousands, of the passion men have for perpetuating their memory; this weakness (I call every sentiment so that cannot be defended by reason) is so universal, it may be looked on as instinct; and as no instinct is implanted but to some purpose, I could almost incline to an opinion, which was professed by several of the fathers, and adopted by some of the best French divines, that the punishment of the next life consists not only in the continuance, but the redoubling our attachment for this, in a more intense manner than we can now have any notion of. These reflections would carry me very far: for your comfort my paper is at an end, and I have scarce room to tell you a truth which admits of no doubt, that I am

Your most affectionate mother.

LXXVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Brescia, July 22, N. S. 1758.

WHEN I wrote to you last, my dear child, I told you I had a great cold, which ended in a very bad fever, that continued a fortnight without intermission, and you may imagine has brought me very low. I have not yet left my chamber. My first care is to thank you for yours of May 8.

I have not yet lost all my interest in this country by the death of the Doge, having another very considerable friend, though I cannot expect to keep him long, he being near fourscore. I mean the cardinal

Quirini, who is archbishop of this diocese, and consequently of great power, there being not one family, high or low, in this province, that has not some ecclesiastic in it, and therefore all of them have some dependence on him. He is of one of the first families of Venice, vastly rich of himself, and has many great benefices beside his archbishopric: but these advantages are little in his eyes, in comparison of being the first author (as he fancies) at this day in Christendom; and indeed, if the merit of books consisted in bulk and number, he might very justly claim that character. I believe he has published, yearly, several volumes for above fifty years, beside corresponding with all the literati of Europe, and, among these, several of the senior fellows at Oxford, and some members of the Royal Society, that neither you nor I have ever heard of, whom he is persuaded are the most eminent men in England. He is at present employed in writing his own life, of which he has already printed the first tome; and, if he goes on in the same style, it will be a most voluminous performance. He begins from the moment of his birth, and tells us that, on that day, he made such extraordinary faces, the midwife, chambermaids, and nurses all agreed, that there was born a shining light in church and state. You will think me very merry with the failings of my friend. I confess I ought to forgive a vanity to which I am obliged for many good offices, since I do not doubt it is owing to that, that he professes himself so highly attached to my service, having an opinion that my suffrage is of great weight in the learned world, and that I shall not fail to spread his fame, at least, all over Great Britain. He sent me

a present last week of a very uncommon kind, even his own picture, extremely well done, but so flattering, that it is a young old man, with a most pompous inscription under it. I suppose he intended it for the ornament of my library, not knowing it is only a closet: however, these distinctions he shows me, gives me a figure in this town, where every body has something to hope from him; and it was certainly in a view to that they would have complimented me with a statue; for I would not have you mistake so far as to imagine there is any set of people more grateful or generous than another. Mankind is every where the same: like cherries or apples, they may differ in size, shape, or colour, from different soils, climates, or culture, but are still essentially the same species; and the little black wood cherry is not nearer akin to the may-dukes that are served at great tables, than the wild naked negro to the fine figures adorned with coronets and ribands. This observation might be carried yet farther: all animals are stimulated by the same passions, and act very nearly alike, as far as we are capable of observing them.

The conclusion of your letter has touched me very much. I sympathise with you, my dear child, in all the concern you express for your family: you may remember I represented it to you, before you were married; but that is one of the sentiments it is impossible to comprehend till it is felt. A mother only knows a mother's fondness. Indeed the pain so overbalances the pleasure, that I believe, if it could be thoroughly understood, there would be no mothers at all. However, take care that the anxiety for

the future does not take from you the comforts you may enjoy in the present hour: it is all that is properly ours; and yet such is the weakness of humanity, we commonly lose what is, either by regretting the past, or disturbing our minds with fear of what may be. You have many blessings; a husband you love, and who behaves well to you, agreeable hopeful children, a handsome convenient house, with pleasant gardens, in a good air and fine situation, which I place among the most solid satisfactions of life. The truest wisdom is that which diminishes to us what is displeasing, and turns our thoughts to the advantages which we possess. I can assure you I give no precepts I do not daily practise. How often do I fancy to myself the pleasure I should take in seeing you in the midst of the little people; and how severe do I then think my destiny, that denies me that happiness! I endeavour to comfort myself by reflecting, that we should certainly have perpetual disputes (if not quarrels) concerning the management of them; the affection of a grandmother has generally a tincture of dotage: you would say I spoilt them, and perhaps not be much in the wrong. Speaking of them calls to my remembrance the token I have so long promised my god-daughter: I am really ashamed of it: I would have sent it by Mr. Anderson, if he had been going immediately to London; but as he proposed a long tour, I durst not press it upon him. It is not easy to find any one who will take the charge of a jewel for a long journey; it may be, the value of it in money to choose something for herself, would be as acceptable: if so, I will send you a note upon

Child. Ceremony should be banished between us. I beg you will speak freely upon that, and all other occasions, to your most affectionate mother.

LXXIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dairy-house, July 26, N. S. 1752.

I AM really as fond of my garden as a young author of his first play, when it has been well received by the town, and can no more forbear teasing my acquaintance for their approbation: though I gave you a long account of it lately, I must tell you, that I have made two little terraces, raised twelve steps each, at the end of my great walk; they are just finished, and a great addition to the beauty of my garden. I enclose you a rough draught of it, drawn (or more properly scrawled) by my own hand, without the assistance of rule or compasses, as you will easily perceive. I have mixed in my espaliers as many rose and jessamine trees as I can cram in; and in the squares designed for the use of the kitchen, have avoided putting any thing disagreeable either to sight or smell, having another garden below for cabbage, onions, and garlic. All the walks are garnished with beds of flowers, beside the parterres, which are for a more distinguished sort. I have neither brick nor stone walls: all my fence is a high hedge, mingled with trees; but fruit is so plenty in this country, nobody thinks it worth stealing. Gardening is certainly the next amuse-

ment to reading; and as my sight will now permit me little of that, I am glad to form a taste that can give me so much employment, and be the plaything of my age, now my pen and needle are almost useless to me.

I am very glad you are admitted into the conversation of the prince and princess: it is a favour that you ought to cultivate for the good of the family, which is now numerous, and it may one day be of great advantage. I think lord Bute much in the right to endeavour the continuance of it; and it would be imprudent in you to neglect what may be of great use to your children. I pray God bless both you and them: it is the daily prayer of your most affectionate mother.

Now the sea is open, we may send packets to one another. I wish you would send me Campbell's book of prints of the English houses,* and that lord Bute would be so good to choose me the best book of practical gardening extant.

LXXX.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, Oct. 10, N. S. 1753.

I THINK I now know why our correspondence is so miserably interrupted, and so many of my letters lost to and from England; but I am no happier in the discovery than a man that has found out his complaints proceed from a stone in the kidneys: I

* Vitruvius Britannicus.

know the cause, but am entirely ignorant of the remedy, and must suffer my uneasiness with what patience I can.

An old priest made me a visit as I was folding my last packet to my daughter. Observing it to be large, he told me I had done a great deal of business that morning. I made answer, I had done no business at all; I had only wrote to my daughter on family affairs, or such trifles as make up women's conversation. He said gravely, people like your excellenza do not use to write long letters upon trifles. I assured him, that if he understood English, I would let him read my letter. He replied, with a mysterious smile, If I did understand English, I should not understand what you have written, except you would give me the key, which I durst not presume to ask. What key? (said I, staring) there is not one cypher beside the date. He answered, cyphers were only used by novices in politics, and it was very easy to write intelligibly, under feigned names of persons and places, to a correspondent, in such a manner as should be almost impossible to be understood by any body else.

Thus I suppose my innocent epistles are severely scrutinized: and when I talk of my grand-children, they are fancied to represent all the potentates of Europe. This is very provoking. I confess there are good reasons for extraordinary caution at this juncture; but it is very hard I cannot pass for being as insignificant as I really am.

The house at Acton was certainly left to lady Carolina;* and whatever lady Anne left, is so little

* The daughters of Evelyn duke of Kingston, by lady

(when divided into five parts) it is not worth inquiring for; especially after so long silence. I heartily congratulate you on the recovery of your sight. It is a blessing I prefer to life, and will seek for glasses whenever I am in a place where they are sold.

LXXXI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Nov. 27, N. S. 1753.

DEAR CHILD,

By the account you give me of London, I think it very much reformed; at least you have one sin the less, and it was a very reigning one in my time, I mean scandal: it must be literally reduced to a whisper, since the custom of living all together. I hope it has also banished the fashion of talking all at once, which was very prevailing when I was in town, and may perhaps contribute to brotherly love and unity, which was so much declined in my memory, that it was hard to invite six people that would not, by cold looks or piquing reflections, affront one another. I suppose parties are at an end, though I fear it is the consequence of the old almanack prophecy, "Poverty brings peace;" and I fancy you really follow the French mode, and the lady keeps an assembly, that the assembly may

Isabella Bentinck, his second wife. Lady Carolina Pierrepont married Thomas Brand, esq. and died June 9, 1753. *Lady Anne* died in 1730, unmarried.

keep the lady, and card-money pay for clothes and equipage, as well as cards and candles. I find I should be as solitary in London as I am here in the country, it being impossible for me to submit to live in a *drum*, which I think so far from a cure of uneasiness, that it is, in my opinion, adding one more to the heap. There are so many attached to humanity, it is impossible to fly from them all; but experience has confirmed to me (what I always thought) that the pursuit of pleasure will be ever attended with pain, and the study of ease be most certainly accompanied with pleasures. I have had this morning as much delight in a walk in the sun as ever I felt formerly in the crowded Mall, even when I imagined I had my share of the admiration of the place, which was generally soured before I slept by the informations of my female friends, who seldom failed to tell me, it was observed that I had showed an inch above my shoe-heels or some other criticism of equal weight, which was construed affectation, and utterly destroyed all the satisfaction *my* vanity had given me. I have now no other but in my little housewifery, which is easily gratified in this country, where, by the help of my receipt book, I make a very shining figure among my neighbours, by the introduction of custards, cheesecakes, and mince pies, which were entirely unknown to these parts, and are received with universal applause, and I have reason to believe will preserve my memory even to future ages, particularly by the art of butter-making, in which I have so improved them, that they now make as good as in any part of England.

My paper is at an end, which I do not doubt you

are glad of. I have hardly room for my compliments to lord Bute, blessing to my grand-children, and to assure you that I am ever your most affectionate mother.

LXXXII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Dec. 13, 1753.

DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE wrote you so many letters without any return, that if I loved you at all less than I do, I should certainly give over writing. I received a kind letter last post from lady Oxford, which gives me hopes I shall at length receive yours, being persuaded you have not neglected our correspondence, though I am not so happy to have the pleasure of it.

I have little to say from this solitude, having already sent you a description of my garden, which, with my books, takes up all my time. I made a small excursion last week to visit a nunnery, twelve miles from hence, which is the only institution of the kind in all Italy. It is in a town in the state of Mantua, founded by a princess of the house of Gonzaga, one of whom (now very old) is the present abbess: they are dressed in black, and wear a thin cyprus veil at the back of their heads, excepting which, they have no mark of a religious habit, being set out in their hair, and having no guimpe, but wearing *des collets montez*, for which I have no name in English, but you may have seen them in very old pictures, being in fashion both before and

ruffs. Their house is a very large handsome
ng, though not regular, every sister having
y to build her own apartment to her taste,
ı consists of as many rooms as she pleases:
ıave each a separate kitchen, and keep cooks
vhat other servants they think proper, though
is a very fine public refectory: they are per-
d to dine in private whenever they please.
· garden is very large, and the most adorned
y in these parts. They have no grates, and
what visits they will, always two together,
eceive those of the men as well as the la-
I was accompanied when I went with all
obility of the town, and they showed me all
ıouse, without excluding the gentlemen; but
I think the most remarkable privilege, is a
ry house, which belongs to them, three miles
the town, where they pass every vintage, and
y time any four of them may take their plea-
:here, for as many days as they choose. They
to differ from the *chanoinesse* of Flanders only
:ir vow of celibacy. They take pensioners, but
hose of quality. I saw here a niece of general
n. Those who profess are obliged to prove a
nt as noble as the knights of Malta. Upon the
e, I think it the most agreeable community I
seen, and their behaviour more decent than
of the cloistered nuns, who I have heard say
selves, that the grate permits all liberty of
h, since it leaves them no other, and indeed
generally talk as if they thought so. I went
nonastery, which gave me occasion to know a
deal of their conduct, which (though the
nt of the best reputation in that town, where

it is) was such, as I would as soon put a girl into the play-house for education, as send her among them.

My paper is at an end, and hardly leaves room for my compliments to lord Bute, blessing to my grandchildren, and assurance to yourself of being your most affectionate mother.

LXXXIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, April 28, 1754.

DEAR CHILD,

I AM quite sick with vexation at the interruption of our correspondence. I have sent six letters since the date of the last which you say you have received; and three addressed to my sister, lady Mar, none of which you say are arrived. You have had no loss further than in testimonies of my real affection: my long stories of what happens here can be but of little entertainment to you; but every thing from England is interesting to me, who live the life, as I have already told you, of Robinson Crusoe, whose goats and kids were as much his companions as any of the people I see here. My time is wholly dedicated to the care of a decaying body, and endeavouring, as the old song says, "to grow wiser and better as my strength wears away." I imagine the duke of Newcastle* will soon have the treasurer's staff; the title of first commissioner is not equal to his importance. You do not tell me how

* Appointed first lord of the treasury in March, 1754.

Mr. Pelham* has disposed of his affairs, and you should be particular in your relations. I am as ignorant of every thing that passes in London, as if I inhabited the deserts of Africa. My health is so often disordered, that I begin to be as weary of mending it as mending old lace, which, when it is patched in one place, breaks out in another. I am very glad of lord Mountstuart's† recovery, and pity very much the pain you have suffered during his danger. It would have been terrible to have lost so agreeable a child. I dare not advise you to moderate your tenderness, finding it impossible to overcome my own, notwithstanding my melancholy experience. This letter is incomparably dull. I cannot resolve to own it by setting my name to it.

My compliments to lord B. God bless you and yours.

LXXXIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 23, 1754.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE promised you some remarks on all the books I have received. I believe you would easily forgive my not keeping my word; however, I shall go on. The Rambler is certainly a strong misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors,

* Henry Pelham, esq. died March 6, 1754. He had been appointed first lord of the treasury in November, 1743. He succeeded Samuel lord Sandys.

† The present marquis of Bute.

following the Spectator (with the same pace a pack-horse would do a hunter) in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper. These writers may, perhaps, be of service to the public, which is saying a great deal in their favour. There are numbers of both sexes, who never read any thing but such productions, and cannot spare time, from doing nothing, to go through a sixpenny pamphlet. Such gentle readers may be improved by a moral hint, which, though repeated over and over from generation to generation, they never heard in their lives. I should be glad to know the name of this laborious author. H. Fielding has given a true picture of himself and his first wife, in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Booth, some compliments to his own figure excepted; and, I am persuaded, several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact. I wonder he does not perceive Tom Jones and Mr. Booth are sorry scoundrels. All this sort of books have the same fault, which I cannot easily pardon, being very mischievous. They place a merit in extravagant passions, and encourage young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of the misery they choose to plunge themselves into; expecting legacies from unknown relations, and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures. Fielding has really a fund of true humour, and was to be pitied at his first entrance into the world, having no choice, as he said himself, but to be a hackney writer, or a hackney coachman. His genius deserved a better fate; but I cannot help blaming that continued indiscretion, to give it the softest name, that has run through his life, and I am afraid still remains. I

ed R. Random to be his, though without his
. I cannot think Ferdinand Fathom wrote by
ame hand, it is every way so much below it.
Fielding has mended her style in her last
ie of David Simple, which conveys a useful
, though she does not seem to have intended
mean, shows the ill consequences of not pro-
g against casual losses, which happen to almost
body. Mrs. Orgueil's character is well drawn,
s frequently to be met with. The Art of
enting, the Female Quixote, and Sir C. Good-
are all sale work. I suppose they proceed
her pen, and I heartily pity her, constrained
r circumstances to seek her bread by a method
not doubt she despises. Tell me who is that
plished countess she celebrates. I left no
person in London; nor can I imagine who is
by the English Sappho mentioned in Betsy
ghtless, whose adventures, and those of Jem-
ssamy, gave me some amusement. I was bet-
ntertained by the Valet, who very fairly re-
nts how you are bought and sold by your ser-
. I am now so accustomed to another manner
atment, it would be difficult to me to suffer
s his adventures have the uncommon merit of
g in a surprising manner. The general want
ention, which reigns among our writers, in-
me to think it is not the natural growth of
land, which has not sun enough to warm the
nation. The press is loaded by the servile
of imitators. Lord Bolingbroke would have
d Horace in this place. Since I was born, no
al has appeared excepting Congreve, and Field-
who would, I believe, have approached nearer

to his excellences, if not forced by necessity to publish without correction, and throw many productions into the world he would have thrown into the fire, if meat could have been got without money, or money without scribbling. The greatest virtue, justice, and the most distinguished prerogative of mankind, writing, when duly executed, do honour to human nature; but when degenerated into trades, are the most contemptible ways of getting bread. I am sorry not to see any more of Peregrine Pickle's performances; I wish you could tell me his name.

I cannot forbear saying something in relation to my grand-daughters, who are very near my heart. If any of them are fond of reading, I would not advise you to hinder them (chiefly because it is impossible) seeing poetry, plays, or romances; but accustom them to talk over what they read, and point out to them, as you are very capable of doing, the absurdity often concealed under fine expressions, where the sound is apt to engage the admiration of young people. I was so much charmed, at fourteen, with the dialogue of Henry and Emma, (I can say it by heart to this day,) without reflecting on the monstrous folly of the story in plain prose, where a young heiress to a fond father is represented falling in love with a fellow she had only seen as a huntsman, a falconer, and a beggar, and who confesses, without any circumstance of excuse, that he is obliged to run his country, having newly committed a murder. She ought reasonably to have supposed him, at best, a highwayman; yet the virtuous virgin resolves to run away with him to live among the banditti, and wait upon h

trollop, if she had no other way of enjoying his company. This senseless tale is, however, so well varnished with melody of words and pomp of sentiments, I am convinced it has hurt more girls than ever were injured by the worst poems extant.

I fear this counsel has been repeated to you before; but I have lost so many letters designed for you, I know not which you have received. If you would have me avoid this fault, you must take notice of those that arrive, which you very seldom do. My dear child, God bless you and yours. I am ever your most affectionate mother.

LXXXV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 24, 1754.

It is always a great pleasure to me, my dear child, to hear of your health, and that of your family. This year has been fatal to the literati of Italy. The marquis Maffei soon followed cardinal Quirini. He was in England when you were married. Perhaps you may remember his coming to see your father's Greek inscription:* he was then an old man, and consequently now a great age; but preserved his memory and senses in their first vigour. After having made the tour of Europe in the search of antiquities, he fixed his residence in his native town of Verona, where he erected himself a little

* Presented by Mr. Wortley to Trinity-college, Cambridge.

empire, from the general esteem, and a conversation (so they call an assembly) which he established in his palace, which is one of the largest in that place, and so luckily situated, that it is between the theatre and the ancient amphitheatre. He made piazzas leading to each of them, filled with shops, where were sold coffee, tea, chocolate, all sorts of sweetmeats, and in the midst a court well kept and sanded, for the use of those young gentlemen who would exercise their managed horses, or show their mistresses their skill in riding. His gallery was open every evening at five o'clock, where he had a fine collection of antiquities, and two large cabinets of medals, intaglios, and cameus, arranged in exact order. His library joined to it; and on the other side a suite of five rooms, the first of which was destined to dancing, the second to cards (but all games of hazard excluded), and the others (where he himself presided in an easy chair) sacred to conversation, which always turned upon some point of learning, either historical or poetical. Controversy and politics being utterly prohibited, he generally proposed the subject, and took great delight in instructiug the young people, who were obliged to seek the medal, or explain the inscription, that illustrated any fact they discoursed of. Those who chose the diversion of the public walks or theatre, went thither, but never failed returning to give an account of the drama, which produced a critical dissertation on that subject, the marquis having given shining proofs of his skill in that art. His tragedy of Merope, which is much injured by Voltaire's translation, being esteemed a masterpiece, and his comedy of the Ceremonies, being a

just ridicule of those formal fopperies, it has gone a great way in helping to banish them out of Italy. The walkers contributed to the entertainment by an account of some herb or flower, which led the way to a botanical conversation; or, if they were such inaccurate observers as to have nothing of that kind to offer, they repeated some pastoral description. One day in the week was set apart for music, vocal and instrumental, but no mercenaries were admitted to the concert. Thus, at very little expense (his fortune not permitting a large one), he had the happiness of giving his countrymen a taste of polite pleasure, and showing the youth how to pass their time agreeably without debauchery; and (if I durst say it) in so doing, has been a greater benefactor to his country than the cardinal, with all his magnificent foundations, and voluminous writings, to support superstition, and create disputes on things, for the most part, in their own nature, indifferent. The Veronese nobility, having no road open to advancement, are not tormented with ambition, or its child, faction; and having learned to make the best of the health and fortune allotted them, terminate all their views in elegant pleasure. They say, God has reserved glory to himself, and permitted pleasure to the pursuit of man. In the autumn, which is here the pleasantest season of the year, a band of about thirty join their hunting equipages, and, carrying with them a portable theatre and a set of music, make a progress in the neighbouring provinces, where they hunt every morning, perform an opera every Sunday, and other plays the rest of the week, to the entertainment of all the neighbourhood. I have had many

honourable invitations from my old friend Maffei,* to make one of this society; but some accident or other has always prevented me. You, that are accustomed to hear of deep political schemes and wise harangues, will despise, perhaps, this trifling life. I look upon them in another light; as a set of rational philosophers—

> Who sing and dance, and laugh away their time;
> Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime.

My paper is out.

LXXXVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Sept. 20, 1754.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM extremely delighted by your last letter. Your pleasure in your daughter's company is exactly what I have felt in yours, and recals to me many tender ideas, perhaps better forgot. You observe, very justly, that my affection, which was confined to one, must be still more intense than yours, which is divided among so many. I cannot help being anxious for their future welfare, though thoroughly convinced of the folly of being so. Human prudence is so short-sighted, that it is common

* The marquis Scipione Maffei, the author of the "Verona Illustrata," 1733, folio, and the "Museum Veronense," 1749, folio, was very highly esteemed in the literary world as an antiquary and virtuoso.

to see the wisest schemes disappointed, and things often take a more favourable turn than there is any apparent reason to expect. My poor sister Gower, I really think, shortened her life by fretting at the disagreeable prospect of a numerous family, slenderly provided for; yet you see how well fortune has disposed of them. You may be as lucky as lady Selina Bathurst.* I wish lady Mary's destiny may lead her to a young gentleman I saw this spring. He is son to judge Hervey, but takes the name of Desbouverie, on inheriting a very large estate from his mother. He will not charm at first sight; but I never saw a young man of better understanding, with the strictest notions of honour and morality, and, in my opinion, a peculiar sweetness of temper. Our acquaintance was short, he being summoned to England on the death of his younger brother. I am persuaded he will never marry for money, nor even for beauty. Your daughter's character perfectly answers the description of what he wished for his bride. Our conversation happened on the subject of matrimony, in his last visit, his mind being much perplexed on that subject, supposing his father, who is old and infirm, had sent for him with some view of that sort.

You will laugh at the castles I build in relation to my grand-children; and will scarcely think it possible that those I have never seen should so much employ my thoughts. I can assure you that they are, next to yourself, the objects of my tender-

* Lady Selina Shirley, daughter of Robert earl Ferrers, wife of Peter Bathurst, esq. of Clarendon-park, county of Wilts.

est concern; and it is not from custom, but my heart, when I send them my blessing, and say, that I am your most affectionate mother.

LXXXVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, 1754.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of September 15, this morning, October 9, and am exceedingly glad of the health of you and your family. I am fond of your little Louisa: to say truth, I was afraid of a Bess, a Peg, or a Suky, which all give me the idea of washing-tubs and scouring of kettles.

I am much obliged to Mr. Hamilton, which is, according to the academy of compliments, more his goodness than my deserts: I saw him but twice, and both times in mixed company: but I am surprised you have never mentioned lord Roseberry,* by whom I sent a packet to you, and took some pains to show him civilities: he breakfasted with me at Padua: I gave him bread and butter of my own manufacture, which is the admiration of all the English. He promised to give you full information of myself and all my employments. He seemed delighted with my house and gardens, and perhaps has forgot he ever saw me, or any thing that belonged to me. We have had many English

* John Primrose, earl of Roseberry, died November 28, 1755.

here. Mr. G***le, his lady, and her suite of adorers, deserve particular mention: he was so good as to present me with his curious book: since the days of the honourable Mr. Edward Howard, nothing has ever been published like it. I told him the age wanted an earl of Dorset to celebrate it properly; and he was so well pleased with that speech, that he visited me every day, to the great comfort of madame, who was entertained, meanwhile, with parties of pleasure of another kind, though I fear I lost his esteem at last by refusing to correspond with him. However, I qualified my denial by complaining of my bad eyes not permitting me to multiply my correspondents. I could give you the characters of many other travellers, if I thought it would be of any use to you. It is melancholy to see the pains our pious minister takes to debauch the younger sort of them: but, as you say, all is melancholy that relates to Great Britain. I have a high value for Mr. Pitt's* probity and understanding, without having the honour of being acquainted with him. I am persuaded he is able to do whatever is within the bounds of possibility; but there is an Augæan stable to be cleaned, and several other labours, that I doubt if Hercules himself would be equal to.

If the duke of Kingston only intends to build a hunting seat at Thoresby, I think it is most proper for the situation, which was certainly by nature never designed for a palace. I hope he will not employ the same architect that built his house in London. You see I am not entirely divested of

* The late earl of Chatham.

family prejudices, though, I thank the Lord, they are not lively enough to give me violent uneasiness. I cannot help wishing well to my ever dear brother's children: however, I have the conscious satisfaction of knowing I have done my duty towards them as far as my power extended. Nobody can be served against their will. May all your young ones grow up an honour to you! My paper is out. I have scarce room to assure you, my dear child, that I am ever your most affectionate mother.

LXXXVIII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Louvere, Dec. 19, N. S. 1754.

I RECEIVED yours of October 6, yesterday, which gave me great pleasure. I am flattered by finding that our sentiments are the same in regard to lord Bolingbroke's writings, as you will see more clearly, if you ever have the long letter I have wrote to you on that subject. I believe he never read Horace, or any other author, with a design of instructing himself, thinking he was born to give precepts, and not to follow them: at least, if he was not mad enough to have this opinion, he endeavoured to impose it on the rest of the world. All his works, being well considered, are little more than a panegyric on his own universal genius; many of his pretensions are as preposterously inconsistent as if sir Isaac Newton had aimed at being a critic in fashions, and wrote for the information of tailors and mantua-makers. I am of opinion that he never looked

into half the authors he quotes, and am much mistaken if he is not obliged to M. Bayle for the generality of his criticisms; for which reason he affects to despise him, that he may steal from him with the less suspicion. A diffusive style (though admired as florid by all half-witted readers) is commonly obscure, and always trifling. Horace has told us, that where words abound, sense is thinly spread; as trees overcharged with leaves bear little fruit.

You do not mention lord Orrery, or, perhaps, would not throw away time in perusing that extraordinary work, addressed to a son, whom he educates with an intention that he should be a first minister, and promises to pray to God for him if ever he plays the knave in that station. I perceive that he has already been honoured with five editions. I wish that encouragement may prevail with him to give the world more memoirs. I am resolved to read them all, though they should multiply to as many tomes as Erasmus.

Here are no newspapers to be had but those printed under this government; consequently, I never learn the births or deaths of private persons. I was ignorant of that of my poor friend the duke of Bolton,* when my daughter's last letter told me the death of the duke, and the jointure he has left his second duchess.

I am very glad your health is so good. May that and every other blessing be ever yours.

* He died August 26, 1754. His second wife was Lavinia Fenton, the celebrated Polly Peachum, in Gay's Beggar's Opera, whom he married in 1751.

LXXXIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Jan. 1, 1755. N. S.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I WISH you many new years, accompanied with every blessing that can render them agreeable; and that it was in my power to send you a better new year's gift than a dull letter: you must, however, accept it as well meant, though ill performed. I am glad you have found a house to please you. I know nothing of that part of the town you mention. I believe London would appear to me as strange as any place I have passed in my travels, and the streets as much altered as the inhabitants. I did not know lady H. Wentworth * was married, though you speak of her children: you see my total ignorance: it would be amusing to me to hear various things that are as indifferent to you as an old almanack. I am sorry my friend Smollett† loses his time in translations: he has certainly a talent for invention, though

* Lady Harriet Wentworth, daughter of Thomas earl of Strafford, was married to Henry Vernon, esq. 1743.

† Dr. Tobias Smollett published "Roderick Random" in 1748; "Peregrine Pickle" in 1751; from 1756 to 1763 was the original manager of the "Critical Review;" "Ferdinand Count Fathom" in 1753; translation of "Don Quixote" in 1754; "History of England," 1758; "Sir Launcelot Graves," 1762; "Adventures of an Atom," 1769; "Travels in France and Italy," 1770; and "Humphrey Clinker," 1771. He died at Leghorn, Oct. 21, 1771, where he was buried.

I think it flags a little in his last work. Don Quixote is a difficult undertaking: I shall never desire to read any attempt to new-dress him. Though I am a mere piddler in the Spanish language, I had rather take pains to understand him in the original than sleep over a stupid translation.

I thank you for your partiality in my favour. It is not my interest to rectify mistakes that are so obliging to me. To say truth, I think myself an uncommon kind of creature, being an old woman without superstition, peevishness, or censoriousness. I am so far from thinking my youth was past in an age of more virtue and sense than the present, that I am of opinion the world improves every day. I confess I remember to have dressed for St. James's chapel with the same thoughts your daughters will have at the opera; but am not of the Rambler's mind, that the church is the proper place to make love in; and the peepers behind a fan, who divided their glances between their lovers and their prayer-book, were not at all modester than those that now laugh aloud in public walks. I tattle on, and forget you are in town, and consequently I ought to shorten my letters, knowing very well that the same letter that would be read thrice over in the country, will be crammed into the pocket before it is half gone through, when people are in a hurry to go to the court or play-house. My compliments to lord Bute, and blessings to you and yours, to whom I am ever a most affectionate mother.

XC.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Jan. 23, N. S. 1

I AM very sorry for your past indisposition, a
say truth, not heartily glad of your present
dition; but I neither do nor will admit of
excuses for your silence. I have already told
some ten or twelve times over, that you s
make your eldest daughter your secretary; it
be an ease to yourself, and highly improving t
in every regard: you may, if you please, at
oblige your mother and instruct your daught
only talking half an hour over your tea in a
ing.

The duchess of Queensberry's* misfortune
move compassion in the hardest heart; yet, a
cumstances coolly considered, I think the
lady deserves most to be pitied, being left i
terrible situation of a young (and I suppose)
widowhood, which is walking blindfold upon
amidst precipices, though perhaps as little se
of her danger as a child of a quarter old wo
in the paws of a monkey leaping on the tile
house. I believe, like all others of your ag
have been long convinced there is no real hap

* Charles earl of Drumlanrig, eldest son of the d
Queensberry, married lady Mary Hope, daughter
earl of Hopetoun, July 10, 1754, and was killed by
cidental explosion of a pistol the 20th of October follo

to be found or expected in this world. You have seen a court near enough to know neither riches nor power can secure it; and all human endeavours after felicity are as childish as running after sparrows to lay salt on their tails: but I ought to give you another information, which can only be learned by experience; that liberty is an idea equally chimerical, and has no real existence in this life. I can truly assure you, I have never been so little mistress of my own time and actions, as since I have lived alone. Mankind is placed in a state of dependency, not only on one another (which all are in some degree), but so many inevitable accidents thwart our designs, and limit our best-laid projects. The poor efforts of our utmost prudence and political schemes, appear, I fancy, in the eyes of some superior beings, like the pecking of a young linnet to break a wire cage, or the climbing of a squirrel in a hoop. The moral needs no explanation: let us sing as cheerfully as we can in our impenetrable confinement, and crack our nuts with pleasure from the little store that is allowed us.

My old friend, cardinal Quirini, is dead of an apoplectic fit, which I am sorry for, notwithstanding the disgust that happened between us, on the ridiculous account of which I gave you the history a year ago. His memory will, probably, last as long as this province, having embellished it with so many noble structures, particularly a public library, well furnished, richly adorned, and a college built for poor scholars, with salaries for masters, and plentifully endowed; many charitable foundations, and so large a part of the new cathedral (which will be one of the finest churches in Lombardy) has

been built at his expense, he may be almost called the founder of it. He has left a considerable annuity to continue it, and deserves an eminent place among the few prelates that have devoted what they received from the church to the use of the public, which is not here (as in some countries) so ungrateful to overlook benefits. Many statues have been erected, and medals cast to his honour, one of which has the figures of Piety, Learning, and Munificence, on the reverse, in the attitude of the three Graces. His funeral has been celebrated by the city with all the splendour it was capable of bestowing, and waited on by all ranks of the inhabitants.

You told me, some months since, that a box was made up for me. I have never had the bill of lading, and know not whether you have received the little bill of exchange sent by your most affectionate mother.

XCI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, March 1, 1755.

I PITY lady Mary Coke* extremely. You will be surprised at this sentiment, when she is the present envy of her sex, in the possession of youth, health, wealth, wit, beauty, and liberty. All these seeming

* Lady Mary Coke is the fifth daughter of John duke of Argyle, and was married to Edward lord viscount Coke, eldest son of the earl of Leicester, who died in 1753. The title became extinct in that family in 1759.

advantages will prove snares to her. She appears to me, as I observed in a former instance, to be walking blindfold upon stilts amidst precipices. She is at a dangerous time of life, when the passions are in full vigour, and, we are apt to flatter ourselves, the understanding arrived at maturity. People are never so near playing the fool, as when they think themselves wise: they lay aside that distrust which is the surest guard against indiscretion, and venture on many steps they would have trembled at, at fifteen; and, like children, are never so much exposed to falling, as when they first leave off leading-strings. I think nothing but a miracle, or the support of a guardian angel, can protect her. It is true (except I am much mistaken), nature has furnished her with one very good defence. I took particular notice of her, both from my own liking her, and her uncommonly obliging behaviour to me. She was then of an age not capable of much disguise, and I thought she had a great turn to economy: it is an admirable shield against the most fatal weaknesses. Those who have the good fortune to be born with that inclination, seldom ruin themselves, and are early aware of the designs laid against them. Yet, with all that precaution, she will have so many plots contrived for her destruction, that she will find it very difficult to escape; and if she is a second time unhappily engaged, it will make her much more miserable than the first; as all misfortunes, brought on by our own imprudence, are the most wounding to a sensible heart. The most certain security would be that diffidence which naturally arises from an impartial self-examination. But this is the hardest of all tasks, requiring great reflection, long retire-

ment, and is strongly repugnant to our own vanity, which very unwillingly reveals, even to ourselves, our common frailty, though it is every way a useful study. Mr. Locke, who has made a more exact dissection of the human mind than any man before him, declares, that he gained all his knowledge from the consideration of himself. It is indeed necessary to judge of others. You condemn lord Cornbury without knowing what he could say in his justification. I am persuaded he thought he performed an act of rigid justice, in excluding the duchess of Queensberry from an inheritance to which she had no natural, though a legal right; especially having had a large portion from her real father. I have heard him talk on that subject without naming names, and call it a robbery within the law. He carried that notion to a great height. I agreed with him, that a woman who produced a false child into a family incurred the highest degree of guilt (being irreparable); but I could not be of his opinion, that it was the duty of the child, in such a case, to renounce the fortune the law entitled it to. You see he has acted by a maxim he imagined just. Lady E***x being, inside and out, resembling lord Clarendon; and whoever remembers lord Carleton's eyes, must confess they now shine in the duchess's face. I am not bribed, by lord Cornbury's behaviour to me, to find excuses for him; but I have always endeavoured to look on the conduct of my acquaintance without any regard to their way of acting towards me. I can say, with truth, I have strictly adhered to this principle, whenever I have been injured: but I own, to my shame be it spoken, the love of flattery has some-

times prevailed on me, under the mask of gratitude, to think better of people than they deserved, when they have professed more value for me than I was conscious of meriting. I slide, insensibly, into talking of myself, though I always resolve against it. I will rescue you from so dull a subject, by concluding my letter with my compliments to lord Bute, my blessing to my grand-children, and the assurance of my being ever your most affectionate mother.

XCII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, July 20, N. S. 1755.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE now read over the books you were so good to send, and intend to say something of them all, though some are not worth speaking of. I shall begin, in respect to his dignity, with lord Bolingbroke, who is a glaring proof how far vanity can blind a man, and how easy it is to varnish over to one's self the most criminal conduct. He declares he always loved his country, though he confesses he endeavoured to betray her to popery and slavery; and loved his friends, though he abandoned them in distress, with all the blackest circumstances of treachery. His account of the peace of Utrecht is almost equally unfair or partial: I shall allow that, perhaps, the views of the Whigs, at that time, were too vast, and the nation, dazzled by military glory, had hopes too sanguine; but surely the same terms that the French consented to, at the treaty of Ger-

truydenberg, might have been obtained; or if the displacing of the duke of Marlborough raised the spirits of our enemies to a degree of refusing what they had before offered, how can he excuse the guilt of removing him from the head of a victorious army, and exposing us to submit to any articles of peace, being unable to continue the war? I agree with him, that the idea of conquering France is a wild extravagant notion, and would, if possible, be impolitic; but she might have been reduced to such a state, as would have rendered her incapable of being terrible to her neighbours for some ages: nor should we have been obliged, as we have done almost ever since, to bribe the French ministers to let us live in quiet. So much for his political reasonings, which I confess are delivered in a florid easy style; but I cannot be of lord Orrery's opinion, that he is one of the best English writers. Well turned periods, or smooth lines, are not the perfection either of prose or verse; they may serve to adorn, but can never stand in the place of good sense. Copiousness of words, however ranged, is always false eloquence, though it will ever impose on some sort of understandings. How many readers and admirers has madame de Sevigné, who only gives us, in a lively manner and fashionable phrases, mean sentiments, vulgar prejudices, and endless repetitions? Sometimes the tittle-tattle of a fine lady, sometimes that of an old nurse, always tittle-tattle; yet so well gilt over by airy expressions and a flowing style, she will always please the same people to whom lord Bolingbroke will shine as a first-rate author. She is so far to be excused, as her letters were not intended for the press; while

he labours to display to posterity all the wit and learning he is master of, and sometimes spoils a good argument by a profusion of words, running out into several pages a thought that might have been more clearly expressed in a few lines; and, what is worse, often falls into contradiction and repetitions, which are almost unavoidable to all voluminous writers, and can only be forgiven to those retailers, whose necessity compels them to diurnal scribbling, who load their meaning with epithets, and run into digressions, because (in the jockey phrase) it rids ground, that is, covers a certain quantity of paper, to answer the demand of the day. A great part of lord Bolingbroke's letters are designed to show his reading, which, indeed, appears to have been very extensive; but I cannot perceive that such a minute account of it can be of any use to the pupil he pretends to instruct; nor can I help thinking he is far below either Tillotson or Addison, even in style, though the latter was sometimes more diffuse than his judgment approved, to furnish out the length of a daily Spectator. I own I have small regard for lord Bolingbroke as an author, and the highest contempt for him as a man. He came into the world greatly favoured both by nature and fortune, blest with a noble birth, heir to a large estate, endowed with a strong constitution, and, as I have heard, a beautiful figure, high spirits, a good memory, and a lively apprehension, which was cultivated by a learned education: all these glorious advantages being left to the direction of a judgment stifled by unbounded vanity, he dishonoured his birth, lost his estate, ruined his reputation, and

destroyed his health, by a wild pursuit of em
even in vice and trifles.

I am far from making misfortune a matter
proach. I know there are accidental occur
not to be foreseen or avoided by human pru
by which a character may be injured, wealth
pated, or a constitution impaired; but I t
may reasonably despise the understanding
who conducts himself in such a manner as na
produces such lamentable consequences, an
tinues in the same destructive paths to the er
long life, ostentatiously boasting of morals an
losophy in print, and with equal ostentation
ging of the scenes of low debauchery in publi
versation, though deplorably weak both in
and body, and his virtue and his vigour in a
of non-existence. His confederacy with Swi
Pope puts me in mind of that of Bessus a
sword-men, in the King and no King, who e
vour to support themselves by giving certifica
each other's merit. Pope has triumphantly de
that they may do and say whatever silly thing
please, they will still be the greatest geniuse
ture ever exhibited. I am delighted with the
parison given of their benevolence, which is i
most aptly figured by a circle in the water,
widens till it comes to nothing at all; but
provoked at lord Bolingbroke's misrepresen
of my favourite Atticus, who seems to have
the only Roman that, from good sense, had
notion of the times in which he lived, in whic
republic was inevitably perishing, and the tw
tions, who pretended to support it, equall

deavouring to gratify their ambition in its ruin. A wise man, in that case, would certainly declare for neither, and try to save himself and family from the general wreck, which could not be done but by a superiority of understanding acknowledged on both sides. I see no glory in losing life or fortune by being the dupe of either, and very much applaud that conduct which could preserve an universal esteem amidst the fury of opposite parties. We are obliged to act vigorously, where action can do any good; but in a storm, when it is impossible to work with success, the best hands and ablest pilots may laudably gain the shore if they can. Atticus could be a friend to men, without awaking their resentment, and be satisfied with his own virtue, without seeking popular fame: he had the reward of his wisdom in his tranquillity, and will ever stand among the few examples of true philosophy, either ancient or modern.

You must forgive this tedious dissertation. I hope you read in the same spirit I write, and take as proofs of affection whatever is sent you by your truly affectionate mother.

I must add a few words on the Essay on Exile, which I read with attention, as a subject that touched me. I found the most abject dejection under a pretended fortitude. That the author felt it, can be no doubt to one that knows (as I do) the mean submissions and solemn promises he made to obtain a return, flattering himself (I suppose) he must of course appear to be at the head of the administration, as every ensign of sixteen fancies he is in a fair way to be a general, on the first sight of his commission.

You will think I have been too long on the character of Atticus. I own I took pleasure in explaining it. Pope thought himself covertly very severe on Addison, by giving him that name; and I feel indignation whenever he is abused, both from his own merit, and because he was ever your father's friend; besides, that it is naturally disgusting to see him lampooned after his death by the same man who paid him the most servile court while he lived, and was besides highly obliged by him.

XCIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Sept. 22, 1755.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED, two days ago, the box of books you were so kind to send; but I can scarce say whether my pleasure or disappointment was the greater. I was much pleased to see before me a fund of amusement, but heartily vexed to find your letter consisting only of three lines and a half. Why will you not employ lady * * * as secretary, if it is troublesome to you to write? I have told you over and over, you may at the same time oblige your mother and improve your daughter, both which I should think very agreeable to yourself. You can never want something to say. The history of your nursery, if you had no other subject to write on, would be very acceptable to me. I am such a stranger to every thing in England, I should be glad to hear more particulars relating to the fami-

lies I am acquainted with;—if miss Liddel* marries the lord Euston I knew, or his nephew, who has succeeded him; if lord Berkeley† has left children; and several trifles of that sort, that would be a satisfaction to my curiosity. I am sorry for H. Fielding's death, not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but I believe he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did, though few had less reason to do so, the highest of his preferment being raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery. I should think it a nobler and less nauseous employment to be one of the staff-officers that conduct the nocturnal weddings. His happy constitution (even when he had, with great pains, half demolished it) made him forget every thing when he was before a venison pasty, or over a flask of champaigne, and I am persuaded he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret. There was a great similitude between his character and that of Sir Richard Steele. He had the advantage both in learning, and, in my opinion, genius: they both agreed in wanting money in spite of all their friends, and would have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as as extensive as their imagination; yet each of them was so formed for happiness, it is a pity he was not immortal. I have read the Cry; and if I would write in the style to be admired by good lord Or

* She married Augustus Henry earl of Euston, Jan, 29, 1756, who succeeded his grandfather as duke of Grafton in May, 1757.

† Augustus earl of Berkeley died Jan. 9, 1755, and left two sons and two daughters.

rery, I would tell you, "The Cry" made me ready to cry, and the "Art of Tormenting," tormented me very much. I take them to be Sally Fielding's, and also the Female Quixote: the plan of that is pretty, but ill executed: on the contrary, the fable of the Cry is the most absurd I ever saw, but the sentiments generally just; and I think, if well dressed, would make a better body of ethics than Bolingbroke's. Her inventing new words, that are neither more harmonious nor significant than those already in use, is intolerable. The most edifying part of the Journey to Lisbon, is the history of the kitten: I was the more touched by it, having a few days before found one, in deplorable circumstances, in a neighbouring vineyard. I did not only relieve her present wants with some excellent milk, but had her put into a clean basket, and brought to my own house, where she has lived ever since very comfortably.

I desire to have Fielding's posthumous works, with his Memoirs of Jonathan Wild, and Journey to the next World; also, the Memoirs of Versorand, a man of pleasure, and those of a young lady. You will call this trash, trumpery, &c. I can assure you I was more entertained by G. Edwards than H. St. John, of whom you have sent me duplicates. I saw new story books with the same pleasure your eldest daughter does a new dress, or the youngest a new baby. I thank God I can find playthings for my age. I am not of Cowley's mind, that this world is—

A dull ill-acted comedy:

Nor of Mrs. Philips's, that this is—

A too well-acted tragedy.

I look upon it as a very pretty farce, for those that can see it in that light. I confess, a severe critic, that would examine by ancient rules, might fix many defects; but it is ridiculous to judge seriously of a puppet-show. Those that can laugh, and be diverted with absurdities, are the wisest spectators, be it of writings, actions, or people.

The Stage Coach has some grotesque figures that amuse: I place it in the rank of Charlotte Summers, and perhaps it is by the same author. I am pleased with sir Herald for recording a generous action of the duke of Montagu, which I know to be true, with some variation of circumstances. You should have given me a key to the Invisible Spy, particularly to the catalogue of books in it. I know not whether the conjugal happiness of the duke of B * * * *d is intended as a compliment or an irony.

This letter is as long and as dull as any of Richardson's. I am ashamed of it, notwithstanding my maternal privilege of being tiresome.

I return many thanks to lord Bute for the china, which I am sure I shall be very fond of, though I have not yet seen it. I wish for three of Pinchbec's watches, shagrine cases, and enamelled dial plates. When I left England, they were five guineas each. You may imagine they are for presents; one for my doctor, who is exactly parson Adams in another profession, and the others for two priests, to whom I have some obligations.

This Richardson is a strange fellow. I heartily despise him, and eagerly read him, nay, sob over his works, in a most scandalous manner. The two first tomes of Clarissa touched me, as being very re-

sembling to my maiden days; and I find in the pictures of Sir Thomas Grandison and his lady, what I have heard of my mother, and seen of my father.

This letter is grown (I know not how) into an immeasurable length. I answer it to my conscience as a just judgment on you, for the shortness of yours. Remember my unalterable maxim, where we love we have always something to say; consequently, my pen never tires when expressing to you the thoughts of your most affectionate mother.

XCIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, March 2, N. S. 1756.

DEAR CHILD,

I HAD the happiness of a letter from your father last post, by which I find you are in good health, though I have not heard from you for a long time. This frequent interruption of our correspondence is a great uneasiness to me: I charge it on the neglect or irregularity of the post. I sent you a letter by Mr. Anderson a great while ago, to which I never had any answer; neither have I ever heard from him since, though I am fully persuaded he has wrote concerning some little commissions I gave him. I should be very sorry he thought I neglected to thank him for his civilities, I desire lord Bute would inquire about him. I saw him in company with a very pretty pupil, who seemed to me a promising youth. I wish he would fall in love with my grand-

daughter. I dare say you laugh at this early design of providing for her: take it as a mark of my affection for you and yours, which is without any mixture of self-interest, since, with my age and infirmities, there is little probability of my living to see them established. I no more expect to arrive at the age of the duchess of Marlborough than to that of Methusalem; neither do I desire it. I have long thought myself useless to the world. I have seen one generation pass away; and it is gone; for I think there are very few of those left that flourished in my youth. You will perhaps call these melancholy reflections: they are not so. There is a quiet after the abandoning of pursuits, something like the rest that follows a laborious day. I tell you this for your comfort. It was formerly a terrifying view to me, that I should one day be an old woman. I now find that nature has provided pleasures for every state. Those are only unhappy who will not be contented with what she gives, but strive to break through her laws, by affecting a perpetuity of youth, which appears to me as little desirable at present as the babies do to you, that were the delight of your infancy. I am at the end of my paper, which shortens the sermon.

XCV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, March 22, 1756.

I HAVE received but this morning the first box of china lord Bute has been so obliging to send me; I am quite charmed with it, but wish you had sent in it the note of the contents; it has been so long deposited, that it is not impossible some diminution may have happened. Every thing that comes from England is precious to me, to the very hay that is employed in packing. I should be glad to know any thing that could be an agreeable return from hence. There are many things I could send; but they are either contraband, or the custom would cost more than they are worth. I look out for a picture; the few that are in this part of Italy are those that remain in families, where they are entailed, and I might as well pretend to send you a palace. I am extremely pleased with the account you gave of your father's health. I have wrote to desire his consent in the disposal of poor lady Oxford's legacy; I do not doubt obtaining it. It has been both my interest and my duty to study his character, and I can say, with truth, I never knew any man so capable of a generous action.

A late adventure here makes a great noise, from the rank of the people concerned: the marchioness Licinia Bentivoglio, who was heiress of one branch of the Martinenghi, and brought ten thousand gold sequins to her husband, and the expectation of her

father's estate, three thousand pounds sterling per annum, the most magnificent palace at Brescia (finer than any in London), another in the country, and many other advantages of woods, plate, jewels, &c. The cardinal Bentivoglio, his uncle, thought he could not choose better, though his nephew might certainly have chose among all the Italian ladies, being descended from the sovereigns of Bologna, actually a grandee of Spain, a noble Venetian, and in possession of twenty-five thousand pounds sterling per annum, with immense wealth in palaces, furniture, and absolute dominion in some of his lands. The girl was pretty, and the match was with the satisfaction of both families; but she brought with her such a diabolical temper, and such *Luciferan* pride, that neither husband, relations, or servants had ever a moment's peace with her. After about eight years' warfare, she eloped one fair morning, and took refuge in Venice, leaving her two daughters, the eldest scarce six years old, to the care of the exasperated marquis. Her father was so angry at her extravagant conduct, that he would not, for some time, receive her into his house; but, after some months, and much solicitation, parental fondness prevailed, and she remained with him ever since, notwithstanding all the efforts of her husband, who tried kindness, submission, and threats, to no purpose. The cardinal came twice to Brescia, her own father joined his entreaties, nay, *his holiness* wrote a letter with his own hands, and made use of the church authority, but he found it harder to reduce one woman than ten heretics. She was inflexible, and lived ten years in this state of reprobation. Her

father died last winter, and left her his whole estate for her life, and afterwards to her children. Her eldest was now marriageable, and disposed of to the nephew of cardinal Valentino Gonzagua, first minister at Rome. She would neither appear at the wedding, nor take the least notice of a dutiful letter sent by the bride. The old cardinal (who was passionately fond of his illustrious name) was so much touched with the apparent extinction of it, that it was thought to have hastened his death. She continued in the enjoyment of her ill humour, living in great splendor, though almost solitary, having, by some impertinence or other, disgusted all her acquaintance, till about a month ago, when her woman brought her a basin of broth, which she usually drank in her bed. She took a few spoonfuls of it, and then cried out, it was so bad it was impossible to endure it. Her chambermaids were so used to hear her exclamations, that they ate it up very comfortably: they were both seized with the same pangs, and died the next day. She sent for physicians, who judged her poisoned; but, as she had taken a small quantity, by the help of antidotes she recovered, yet is still in a languishing condition. Her cook was examined, and racked, always protesting entire innocence, and swearing he had made the soup in the same manner he was accustomed. You may imagine the noise of this affair. She loudly accused her husband, it being the interest of no other person to wish her out of the world: he resides at Ferrara (about which the greatest part of his lands lie), and was soon informed of this accident. He sent doctors to her, whom she would not see, sent vast alms to all the

convents to pray for her health, and ordered a number of masses to be said in every church of Brescia and Ferrara. He sent letters to the senate at Venice, and published manifestoes in all the capital cities, in which he professes his affection to her, and abhorrence of any attempt against her, and has a cloud of witnesses that he never gave her the least reason of complaint, and even since her leaving him has always spoken of her with kindness, and courted her return. He is said to be remarkably sweet-tempered, and has the best character of any man of quality in this country. If the death of her women did not seem to confirm it, her accusation would gain credit with nobody. She is certainly very sincere in it herself, being so persuaded he has resolved her death, that she dare not take the air, apprehending to be assassinated, and has imprisoned herself in her chamber, where she will neither eat nor drink any thing that she does not see tasted by all her servants. The physicians now say that perhaps poison might fall into the broth accidentally; I confess I do not perceive the possibility of it. As to the cook suffering the rack, that is a mere jest, where people have money enough to bribe the executioner. I decide nothing; but such is the present destiny of a lady, who would have been one of Richardson's heroines, having never been suspected of the least gallantry; hating, and being hated universally, of a most noble spirit, it being proverbial—"as proud as the marchioness Licinia."

I am afraid I have tired you with my long story: I thought it singular enough to amuse you. I believe your censure will be different from that of the

ladies here, who all range themselves in the party of the marquis Guido. They say he is a handsome man, little past forty, and would easily find a second wife, notwithstanding the suspicion raised on this occasion. Many customs, and some laws, are as extraordinary here as the situation of the capital.

I would write to lord Bute, to thank him, if I did not think it would be giving him trouble. I have not less gratitude: I desire you would assure him of it, and that I am to you both

Your most affectionate mother.

XCVI.

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

London, 1756.

Yours of the 8th of March came hither on the 28th, which is the time in which letters usually pass between London and Venice. I bundle up all your letters, and keep a list of the dates of what I send you, so that I cannot mistake as to either. I do not remember that any letter sent to me from a foreign country, besides yours, ever miscarried. As to those I send abroad, I always send two servants with them to the post; so that I do not trust to one servant's honesty: and the officer of the post sees there is evidence of the delivery; so that his neglect or fraud may easily appear. This method is taken by all foreign ministers of state.

I have now something to mention that I believe will be agreeable to you: I mean some particulars

relating to lord Bute, which you have not learned from the prints, nor from our minister at Venice. He stood higher in the late prince of Wales's favour than any man. His attendance was frequent at Leicester-house, where this young prince has resided; and, since his father's death, has continued, without intermission, till new officers were to be placed about him. It is said that another person was designed to be groom of the stole, but that the prince's earnest request was complied with in my lord's favour. It is supposed that the governors, preceptors, &c. who were before about him will be now set aside, and that my lord is his principal adviser. It is not easy to express how well-bred and reasonable the prince always appears at his public levee, which is every Thursday, and on all other occasions. The king of France, and the empress of Germany, always show themselves to great advantage; and this young prince's behaviour is equal to that of either of them. He is supposed to know the true state of this country, and to have the best inclinations to do all in his power to make it flourish.

These appearances do much honour to my lord; and the continuance of his favour is, I believe, wished by all that are unconnected with some of those who have been ministers of state.

E. WORTLEY MONTAGU.

XCVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, May 30, 1756.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I SENT you a long letter very lately, and enclosed one to lady Jane. I fear I cannot prevail on Mr. Prescot to take care of my letters; if he should do it, I beg you would be very obliging to him; remember, civility costs nothing, and buys every thing: your daughters should engrave that maxim in their hearts.

I am sorry sir William Lowther* died unmarried; he ought to have left some of his breed, which are almost extinct: he died unluckily for his acquaintance, though I think fortunately for himself, being yet ignorant of the ingratitude and vileness of mankind. He knew not what it was to lament misplaced obligations, and thought himself blessed in many friends, whom a short time would have shown to be worthless, mercenary, designing, scoundrels. The most tender disposition grows callous by miserable experience: I look upon it as the reason, why so many old people leave immense wealth, in a lump, to heirs they neither love nor esteem; and others, like lord S****n, leave

* Sir William Lowther, who died in 1756, bequeathed 100,000*l.* in legacies to his several friends with whom he was chiefly associated.

it, at random, to they know not who. He was not a covetous man, but had seen so little merit, and was so well acquainted with the vices of mankind, I believe he thought there was none among them deserved any particular distinction. I have passed a long life, and may say, with truth, have endeavoured to purchase friends: accident has put it in my power to confer great benefits, yet I never met with any return, nor indeed any true affection, but from dear lady Oxford, who owed me nothing. Did not these considerations restrain natural generosity, I am of opinion we should see many sir William Lowthers; neither is it saying much in favour of the human heart: it is certain that the highest gratification of vanity is found in bestowing; but, when we plainly foresee being exposed by it to insults, nay, perhaps, abuses, which are often liberally dispersed, by those who wish to hide that they are obliged, we abandon the pleasure rather than suffer the consequence. The first shocks received from this conduct of protesting friends are felt very severely. I now expect them, and they affect me with no more surprise than rain after sunshine. The little good I do is scattered with a sparing hand, against my inclination; but I now know the necessity of managing the hopes of others, as the only links that bind attachment, or even secure us from injuries. Was it possible for me to elevate any body from the station in which they are born, I now would not do it: perhaps it is rebellion against that Providence that has placed them there; all we ought to do is to endeavour to make them easy in the rank assigned them.

I hope you will not forget to send me the bill of lading, without which I may chance to lose the box, which is very precious to, my dear child,

Your most affectionate mother.

XCVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, Nov. 8, 1756.

DEAR CHILD,

You are extremely good to take so much care of my trifling commissions in the midst of so many important occupations. You judged very right on the subject of Mr. W. I saw him often both at Florence and Genoa, and you may believe I know him. I am not surprised at the character of poor Charles F***'s son. The epithet of *fair* and *foolish* belonged to the whole family; and, as he was over persuaded to marry an ugly woman, I suppose his offspring may have lost the beauty, but retained the folly in full bloom. Colonel Otway, younger brother to lady Bridget's spouse, came hither with lord Mandeville: he told me that she has a daughter with the perfect figure of lady Winchilsea. I wish she may meet with as good friends as I was to her aunt; but I will not trouble you with old stories. I have, indeed, my head so full of one, that I hardly know what I say about it. I am advised to tell it you; though I had resolved not to do it. I leave it to your prudence to act as you think proper; commonly speaking, silence and neg-

leet are the best answer to defamation; but this is a case so peculiar, that I am persuaded it never happened to any one but myself.

Some few months before lord William Hamilton married, there appeared a foolish song, said to be wrote by a poetical great lady, who I really think was the character of lady Arabella, in the Female Quixote (without the beauty); you may imagine such a conduct, at court, made him superlatively ridiculous. Lady Delawar, a woman of great merit, with whom I lived in much intimacy, showed this fine performance to me; we were very merry in supposing what answer lord William would make to these passionate addresses; she bid me to say something for a poor man, who had nothing to say for himself. I wrote, *extempore*, on the back of the song, some stanzas, that went perfectly well to the tune. She promised they should never appear as mine, and faithfully kept her word. By what accident they have fallen into the hands of that thing Dodsley,* I know not; but he has printed them as addressed, by me, to the last man I should have addressed them to, and my own words as his answer. I do not believe either Job or Socrates ever had such a provocation. You will tell me, it cannot hurt me with any acquaintance I ever had: it is true; but it is an excellent piece of scandal for

* Dodsley's Collection of Poems was published in three volumes in 1748. The fourth volume appeared in 1749, and the fifth and sixth in 1756. In the sixth volume, p. 230, the dialogue (if it may be so called) between sir William Young and lady Mary is printed, and very erroneously applied.

the same sort of people that propagate, with success, that your nurse left her estate, husband, and family, to go with me to England; and that then I turned her to starve, after defrauding her of God knows what. I thank God, witches are out of fashion, or I should expect to have it deposed, by several credible witnesses, that I had been seen flying through the air on a broomstick, &c.

I am really sick with vexation, but ever your most affectionate mother.

XCIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Padua, Dec. 28, 1756.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours, of November 29th, with great pleasure, some days before I had the box of books, and am highly delighted with the snuff-box: that manufacture is at present as much in fashion at Venice as at London. In general, all the shops are full of English merchandise, and they boast of every thing as coming from London, in the same style as they used to do from Paris. I was shown a set of furniture, of their own invention, in a taste entirely new; it consists of eight large armed chairs, the same number of sconces, a table, and prodigious mirror, all of glass. It is impossible to imagine their beauty: they deserve to be placed in a prince's dressing-room, or grand cabinet; the price demanded is 400*l*. They would be a very

proper decoration for the apartment of a prince so young and beautiful as ours.*

The present ministry promises better counsels than have been followed in my time. I am extremely glad to hear the continuation of your father's health, and that you follow his advice. I am really persuaded (without any dash of partiality) no man understands the interest of England better, or has it more at heart. I am obliged to him for whatever he does for you. I will not indulge myself in troubling you with long letters or commissions, when you are charged with so much business at home and abroad; I shall only repeat the Turkish maxim, which I think includes all that is necessary in a *court*-life: "Caress the favourites, avoid the unfortunate, and trust nobody." You may think the second rule ill-natured; melancholy experience has convinced me of the ill consequence of mistaking distress for merit; there is no mistake more productive of evil. I could add many arguments to enforce this truth, but will not tire your patience.

I intend to correspond with lady J * * *. I confess I was much pleased with her little letter; and, supposing lady M * * * is commenced fine lady, she may have no leisure to read or answer an old grandmother's letters. I presume lady J * * * is to play least in sight till her sister is disposed of: if she loves writing, it may be an employment not disagreeable to herself, and will be extremely grateful to me.

I congratulate my grand-daughters on being born in an age so much enlightened. Sentiments are

* King George III.

certainly extremely silly, and only qualify young people to be the bubbles of all their acquaintance. I do not doubt but that the frequency of assemblies has introduced a more enlarged way of thinking. It is a kind of public education, which I have always thought as necessary for girls as boys. A woman, married at five-and-twenty, from under the eye of a strict parent, is commonly as ignorant as she was at five; and no more capable of avoiding the snares, or struggling with the difficulties, she must infallibly meet with in the commerce of the world. The knowledge of mankind (the most useful of all knowledge) can only be acquired by conversing with them. Books are so far from giving that instruction, that they fill the head with a set of wrong notions, from whence springs a tribe of Clarissas, Harriets, &c. Yet such was the method of education when I was in England, which I had it not in my power to correct.

C.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, June 13, 1757.

It is very true, my dear child, we cannot now maintain a family with the product of a flock; though I do not doubt the present sheep afford as much wool and milk as any of their ancestors, and it is certain our natural wants are not more numerous than formerly; but the world is past its infancy, and will no longer be contented with spoon-meat. Time has added great improvements,

but those very improvements have introduced a train of artificial necessities. A collective body of men make a gradual progress in understanding, like that of a single individual. When I reflect on the vast increase of useful, as well as speculative knowledge, the last three hundred years has produced, and that the peasants of this age have more conveniences than the first emperors of Rome had any notion of, I imagine we are now arrived at that period which answers to fifteen. I cannot think we are older, when I recollect the many palpable follies which are still (almost) universally persisted in: I place that of war as senseless as the boxing of school-boys, and whenever we come to man's estate (perhaps a thousand years hence) I do not doubt it will appear as ridiculous as the pranks of unlucky lads. Several discoveries will then be made, and several truths made clear, of which we have now no more idea, than the ancients had of the circulation of the blood, or the optics of sir Isaac Newton.

You will believe me in a very dull humour when I fill my letter with such whims; and indeed so I am. I have just received the news of sir J. Gray's departure, and am exceedingly vexed I did not know of his designed journey. I suppose he would have carried my token;* and now I utterly despair of an opportunity of sending it, and therefore enclose a note, on Child, for the value of it.

When you see lady Rich, pray do not fail to present my thanks and compliments. I desire the

* Lady Mary sent a present annually to one of her grand-children.

same to every body that thinks it worth while to inquire after me. You mention a colonel Rich as her son; I thought he had been killed in Scotland. You see my entire ignorance of all English affairs, and consequently whatever you tell me of my acquaintance has the merit of novelty to me, who correspond with nobody but yourself and lady Oxford, whose retirement and ill health does not permit her to send me much news.

I expect a letter of thanks from my granddaughter. I wrote to my grandmother long before her age. I desire you would not see it, being willing to judge of her genius. I know I shall read it with some partiality, which I cannot avoid to all that is yours, as I am your most affectionate mother.

CI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Padua, Sept. 5, 1757.

I WROTE to you very lately, my dear child, in answer to that letter Mr. Hamilton brought me: he was so obliging to come on purpose from Venice to deliver it, as I believe I told you; but I am so highly delighted with this, dated August 4, giving an account of your little colony, I cannot help setting pen to paper, to tell you the melancholy joy I had in reading it. You would have laughed to see the old fool weep over it. I now find that age, when it does not harden the heart and sour the temper,

naturally returns to the milky disposition of infancy. Time has the same effect on the mind as on the face. The predominant passion, the strongest feature, become more conspicuous from the others retiring; the various views of life are abandoned, from want of ability to preserve them, as the fine complexion is lost in wrinkles; but, as surely as a large nose grows larger, and a wide mouth wider, the tender child in your nursery will be a tender old woman, though, perhaps, reason may have restrained the appearance of it, till the mind, relaxed, is no longer capable of concealing its weakness; for weakness it is to indulge any attachment at a period of life when we are sure to part with life itself at a very short warning: according to the good English proverb, young people may die, but old must. You see I am very industrious in finding comfort to myself in my exit, and to guard, as long as I can, against the peevishness which makes age miserable in itself, and contemptible to others. It is surprising to me, that, with the most inoffensive conduct, I should meet enemies, when I cannot be envied for any thing, and have pretensions to nothing.

Is it possible the old colonel Duncombe I knew should be lord Feversham, and married to a young wife? As to lord Ranelagh, I confess it must be a very bitter draught to submit to take his name; but his lady has had a short purgatory, and now enjoys affluence with a man she likes, who I am told is a man of merit, which I suppose she thinks preferable to lady Selina's nursery. Here are no old people in this country, neither in dress nor gal-

lantry. I know only my friend Antonio,* who is true to the memory of his adored lady; her picture is always in his sight, and he talks of her in the style of *pastor fido*. I believe I owe his favour to having shown him her miniature, by Rosalba, which I bought at London; perhaps you remember it in my little collection: he is really a man of worth and sense. Hearing it reported, I need not say by whom, that my retirement was owing to having lost all my money at play at Avignon, he sent privately for my chief servant, and desired him to tell him naturally if I was in any distress; and not only offered, but pressed him to lay 3000 sequins on my toilet. I do not believe I could borrow that sum, without good security, among my great relations. I thank God I had no occasion to make use of this generosity: but I am sure you will agree with me that I ought never to forget the obligation. I could give some other instances, in which he has shown his friendship, in protecting me from mortifications, invented by those that ought to have assisted me; but it is a long tiresome story. You will be surprised to hear the general does not yet know these circumstances; he arrived at Venice but a few days before I left it; and, promising me to come to Padua at the fair, I thought I should have time sufficient to tell him my history. Indeed I was in hopes he would have accepted my invitation of lodging in my house; but his multiplicity of affairs hindered him from coming at all. It is only a few days since that he made me a visit, in company with

* Mocenigo.

Mr. Hamilton, before whom I did not think it proper to speak my complaints. They are now gone to drink the waters at Vicenza; when they return, I intend removing to Venice, and then shall relate my grievances, which I have more reason to do than ever. I have tired you with this disagreeable subject: I will release you, and please myself in repeating the assurance of my being ever, while I have a being, your most affectionate mother.

My dear child, do not think of reversing nature by making me presents. I would send you all my jewels and my toilet, if I knew how to convey them, though they are in some measure necessary in this country, where it would be, perhaps, reported I had pawned them, if they did not sometimes make their appearance. I know not how to send commissions for things I never saw: nothing of price I would have, as I would not new furnish an inn I was on the point of leaving; for such is this world to me. Though china is in such high estimation here, I have sometimes an inclination to desire your father to send me the two large jars, that stood in the windows in Cavendish-square. I am sure he does not value them, and believe they would be of no use to you. I bought them at an auction, for two guineas, before the duke of Argyle's example had made all china, more or less, fashionable.

CII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Louvere, Sept. 30, 1757.

MY DEAR CHILD,

LORD Bute has been so obliging as to let me know your safe delivery, and the birth of another daughter:* may she be as meritorious in your eyes as you are in mine! I can wish nothing better to you both, though I have some reproaches to make you. Daughter! daughter! do not call names; you are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, sad stuff, are the title you give to my favourite amusement. If I called a white staff a stick of wood, a gold key gilded brass, and the ensigns of illustrious orders coloured strings, this may be philosophically true, but would be very ill received. We have all our playthings; happy are they that can be contented with those they can obtain: those hours are spent in the wisest manner, that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are the least productive of ill consequences. I think my time better employed in reading the adventures of imaginary people, than the duchess of Marlborough, who passed the latter years of her life in paddling with her will, and contriving schemes of plaguing some, and extracting praise from others, to no purpose; eternally disappointed, and eternally fretting. The active scenes

* Lady Louisa Stewart.

are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I would confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. I must be content with what I can find. As I approach a second childhood, I endeavour to enter into the pleasures of it. Your youngest son is, perhaps, at this very moment riding on a poker, with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he could not know how to manage. I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgment, or history to mislead my opinion: he fortifies his health by exercise; I calm my cares by oblivion. The methods may appear low to busy people; but if he improves his strength, and I forget my infirmities, we both attain very desirable ends.

I have not heard from your father of a long time. I hope he is well, because you do not mention him.

I am ever, dear child,
Your most affectionate mother.

CIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, Jan. 20, 1758.

I AM always glad to hear of my dear child's health, and daily pray for the continuance of it, and all other blessings on you and your family. The carnival hitherto has been clouded by extremely wet

weather, but we are in hopes that the sunshine is reserved for the second part of it, when the morning masquerades give all the ladies an opportunity of displaying both their magnificence and their taste, in the various habits that appear at that time. I was very well diverted by them last year. I hear Rome is crammed with Britons, and suppose we shall see them all in their turns. I cannot say that the rising generation gives any general prospect of improvement either in the arts or sciences, or in any thing else. I am exceedingly pleased that the duchess of Portland is happy in her son-in-law. I must ever interest myself in what happens to any descendant of lady Oxford. I expect that my books and china should set out: they will be a great amusement to me, I mix so little with the gay world, and at present my garden is quite useless.

Venice is not a place to make a man's fortune in. As for those who have money to throw away, they may do it here more agreeably than in any town I know; strangers being received with great civility, and admitted into all their parties of pleasure: but it requires a good estate and good constitution to play deep, and pass so many sleepless nights, as is customary in the best company.

I am invited to a great wedding to-morrow, which will be in the most splendid manner, to the contentment of both the families, every thing being equal, even the indifference of the bride and bridegroom, though each of them is extremely pleased, by being set free from governors or governesses. To say truth, I think they are less likely to be disappointed in the plan they have formed than any of our

romantic couples, who have their heads full of love and constancy.

I stay here, though I am on many accounts better pleased with Padua. Our great minister, the resident, affects to treat me as one in the opposition. I am inclined to laugh rather than be displeased at his political airs; yet, as I am among strangers, they are disagreeable; and, could I have forseen them, would have settled in some other part of the world; but I have taken leases of my houses, been at much pains and expense in furnishing them, and am no longer of an age to make long journeys. I saw, some months ago, a countryman of yours (Mr. Adam,*) who desires to be introduced to you. He seemed to me, in one short visit, to be a man of genius, and I have heard his knowledge of architecture much applauded. He is now in England.

Your account of the changes in ministerial affairs does not surprise me; but nothing could be more astonishing than their all coming in together. It puts me in mind of a friend of mine, who had a large family of favourite animals; and, not knowing how to convey them to his country-house in separate equipages, he ordered a Dutch mastiff, a cat and her kittens, a monkey, and a parrot, all to be packed up together in one large hamper, and sent by a waggon. One may easily guess how this set of company made their journey; and I have never been able to think of the present compound

* Mr. Robert Adam, who built Caen-Wood, Luton-Park, &c. and the Adelphi, in conjunction with his brother. His designs are published.

ministry without the idea of barking, scratching, and screaming. It is too ridiculous a one I own for the gravity of their characters, and still more for the situation the kingdom is in; for, as much as one may encourage the love of laughter, it is impossible to be indifferent to the welfare of one's native country. Adieu.

Your affectionate mother.

CIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, April 3, 1758.

MY DEAR CHILD,

SEVERAL English are expected here at the Ascension, and I hope to find an opportunity of sending you your pearl necklace. I have been persuaded to take a small house here, as living in lodgings is really very disagreeable. However, I shall still retain my favourite palace at Padua, where I intend to reside the greater part of the year. In the mean time, I amuse myself with buying and placing furniture, in which I only consult neatness and convenience, having long since renounced (as it is fit I should) all things bordering upon magnificence. I must confess I sometimes indulge my taste in baubles, which is as excusable in second childhood as in the first. I am sorry the duchess of Portland has not received my thanks for her obliging letter. I also desire to know the name of the merchant to whom the duke consigned the legacy left me by lady Oxford. I see in the newspapers the names of

many novels. I do not doubt, but that the greater part of them are trash, lumber, &c.; however, they will serve to kill idle time. I have written you several letters lately; indeed, I seldom fail to do it once in a fortnight. Unavoidable visits, together with the occupation of fitting and furnishing, hardly leaves any time to dispose of to my own taste, which is (as it ought to be) more solitary than ever. I left my hermitage at Louvere, that what effects I have might not be dissipated by servants, as they would have been had I died there.

Sir James Gray, was, as I am told, universally esteemed during his residence here; but, alas! he is gone to Naples. I wish the maxims of queen Elizabeth were received, who always chose men whose birth or behaviour would make the nation respected; people being apt to look upon them as a sample of their countrymen. If those now employed are so, Lord have mercy upon us! I have seen only Mr. Villette, at Turin, who knew how to support his character. How much the nation has suffered by false intelligence, I believe you are very sensible of; and how impossible it is to obtain truth either from a fool or a knave.

Company forces me upon an abrupt conclusion.

I am ever, my dear child, &c. &c.

CV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, 1758.

DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of the 20th of Feb. yesterday (May the 2d), so irregular is the post. I could forgive the delay, but I cannot pardon the loss of so many that have never arrived at all. Mr. Hamilton is not yet come, nor perhaps will not for some months. I hear he is at Leghorn. General Graham has been dangerously ill; but I am told he is now on his return. We have at present the most extravagant weather that has been known for some years; it is as cold and wet as an English November. Thursday next is the ceremony of the Ascension: the show will be entirely spoilt if the rain continues, to the serious affliction of the fine ladies, who all make new clothes on that occasion. We have had lately two magnificent weddings; lord Mandeville * had the pleasure of dancing at one of them. I appeared at neither, being formal balls, where no masks were admitted, and all people set out in high dress, which I have long renounced, as it is very fit I should, though there were several grand-mothers there, who exhibited their jewels. In this country nobody grows old till they are bed-rid.

* George Viscount Mandeville, eldest son of Robert duke of Manchester.

I wish your daughters to resemble me in nothing but the love of reading, knowing by experience, how far it is capable of softening the cruellest accidents of life: even the happiest cannot be passed over without many uneasy hours; and there is no remedy so easy as books, which, if they do not give cheerfulness, at least restore quiet to the most troubled mind. Those that fly to cards or company for relief generally find they only exchange one misfortune for another.

You have so much business on your hands, I will not take you from more proper employment by a long letter. I am, my dear child, with the warmest affection, ever your tender mother.

CVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Padua, July 17, 1758.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours last night, which gave me a pleasure beyond what I am able to express; (this is not according to the common expression, but a simple truth.) I had not heard from you for some months, and was in my heart very uneasy, from the apprehension of some misfortune in your family; though, as I always endeavour to avoid the anticipation of evil, which is a source of pain, and can never be productive of any good, I stifled my fear as much as possible; yet it cost me many a midnight pang. You have been the passion of my life; you

need thank me for nothing; I gratify myself whenever I can oblige you.

How important is the charge of youth! and how useless all the advantages of nature and fortune without a well-turned mind! I have lately heard of a very shining instance of this truth, from two gentlemen, (very deserving ones they seem to be), who have had the curiosity to travel into Muscovy, and now return to England with Mr. Archer. I inquired after my old acquaintance sir Charles Williams, who I hear is much broken, both in his spirits and constitution. How happy might that man have been, if there had been added to his natural and acquired endowments a dash of morality! If he had known how to distinguish between false and true felicity; and, instead of seeking to increase an estate already too large, and hunting after pleasures that have made him rotten and ridiculous, he had bounded his desires of wealth, and followed the dictates of his conscience. His servile ambition has gained him two yards of red ribbon, and an exile into a miserable country, where there is no society, and so little taste, that I believe he suffers under a dearth of flatterers. This is said for the use of your growing sons, whom I hope no golden temptations will induce to marry women they cannot love, or comply with measures they do not approve. All the happiness this world can afford is more within reach than is generally supposed. Whoever seeks pleasure will undoubtedly find pain; whoever will pursue ease, will as certainly find pleasures. The world's esteem is the highest gratification of human vanity; and that is more easily obtained in a moderate fortune than an overgrown

one, which is seldom possessed, never gained, without envy. I say esteem; for, as to applause, it is a youthful pursuit, never to be forgiven after twenty, and naturally succeeds the childish desire of catching the setting sun, which I can remember running very hard to do; a fine thing truly if it could be caught; but experience soon shows it to be impossible. A wise and honest man lives to his own heart, without that silly splendour that makes him a prey to knaves, and which commonly ends in his becoming one of the fraternity. I am very glad to hear lord Bute's decent economy sets him above any thing of that kind. I wish it may become national. A collective body of men differs very little from a single man; and frugality is the foundation of generosity. I have often been complimented on the English heroism, who have thrown away so many millions, without any prospect of advantage to themselves, purely to succour a distressed princess. I never could hear these praises without some impatience: they sounded to me like the panegyrics made by the dependents on the duke of Newcastle and poor lord Oxford, bubbled when they were commended, and laughed at when they were undone. Some late events will, I hope, open your eyes: we shall see we are in an island, and endeavour to extend our commerce rather than the Quixote reputation of redressing wrongs and placing diadems on heads that should be equally indifferent to us. When time has ripened mankind into common sense, the name of conqueror will be an odious title. I could easily prove that, had the Spaniards established a trade with the Americans, they would have enriched their country more than by the ad-

dition of twenty-two kingdoms, and all the mines they now work: I do not say possess; since, though they are the proprietors, others enjoy the profit.

My letter is too long; I beg your pardon for it; it is seldom I have an opportunity of speaking to you, and I would have you know all the thoughts of your most affectionate mother.

CVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Padua, July 24, 1758.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HOPE this will find you in perfect health. I had a letter from your father last post, dated from Newbold, which tells me a very agreeable piece of news, that the contests of parties, so violent formerly, (to the utter destruction of peace, civility, and common sense,) are so happily terminated, that there is nothing of that sort mentioned in good company. I think I ought to wish you and my grandchildren joy on this general pacification, when I remember all the vexation I have gone through, from my youth upwards, on the account of those divisions, which touched me no more than the disputes between the followers of Mahomet and Ali, being always of opinion that politics and controversy were as unbecoming to our sex as the dress of a prize-fighter; and I would as soon have mounted Fig's theatre as have stewed all night in the gallery of a committee, as some ladies of bright

parts have done. Notwithstanding the habitual (I believe I might say natural) indifference, here am I involved in adventures, as surprising as any related in Amadis de Gaul, or even by Mr. Glanville.* I can assure you I should not be more surprised at seeing myself riding in the air on a broomstick than in the figure of a first-rate politician. You will stare to hear that your nurse keeps her corner (as lord Bolingbroke used to say of miss Oglethorp) in this illustrious conspiracy. I really think the best head of the junto is an English washerwoman, who has made her fortune with all parties, by her compliance in changing her religion, which gives her the merit of a new convert; and her charitable disposition of keeping a house of fair reception for the English captains, sailors, &c. that are distressed by long sea voyages (as sir Simon Legend remarks, in Love for Love), gains her friends among all public-spirited people: the scenes are so comic, they deserve the pen of a Richardson to do them justice. I begin to be persuaded, the surest way of preserving reputation, and having powerful protectors, is being openly lewd and scandalous. I will not be so censorious to take examples from my own sex; but you see doctor Swift, who set at defiance all decency, truth, or reason, had a crowd of admirers, and at their head the virtuous and ingenious earl of Orrery, the polite and learned Mr. Greville, with a number of ladies of fine taste and unblemished characters; while the bishop of Salisbury (Burnet I mean), the most indulgent parent, the most generous churchman, and the most zealous

* The hero of the Female Quixote.

asserter of the rights and liberties of his country, was all his life defamed and vilified, and after his death most barbarously calumniated, for having had the courage to write a history without flattery. I knew him in my very early youth, and his condescension, in directing a girl in her studies, is an obligation I can never forget. *Apropos* of obligations; I hope you remember yours to lady Knatchbull.* Her only son is here; his father has been dead nine years: he gave me the first news of it (so little do I know of what passes among my acquaintance). I made him the bad compliment of receiving him with tears in my eyes, and told him bluntly I was extremely sorry for the loss of so good a friend, without reflecting that it was telling him I was sorry he was in possession of his estate; however, he did not seem offended, but rather pleased at the esteem I expressed for his parents. I endeavoured to repair the blunder by all the civilities in my power, and was very sincere in saying I wished him well, for the sake of his dead and living relations. He appears to me to be what the duke of Kingston was at Thoresby, though more happy in his guardian and governor. The gentleman who is with him is a man of sense, and, I believe, has his pupil's interest really at heart; but there is so much pains taken to make him despise instruction, I fear he will not long resist the allurements of pleasures which his constitution cannot support.

* Sir Wyndham Knatchbull, of Mersham-Hatch, in Kent, succeeded his father in 1749, and died, unmarried, September 26, 1763. His mother was Catharine, daughter of James Harris, of Salisbury, esq.

Here is great joy in the nomination of Mr. Mackenzie for Turin; his friends hoping to see him on his journey. My token for you lies dormant, and is likely so to do some time. None of the English have visited me (excepting sir Wyndham Knatchbull), or in so cold a way, that it would be highly improper to ask favours of them. He is going to Rome; and, it may be, I may be obliged to wait till he returns, next Ascension, before I have an opportunity of conveying it. Such is the behaviour of my loving countrymen! In recompense, I meet with much friendship amongst the noble Venetians, perhaps the more from being no favourite of a man they dislike. It is the peculiar glory of Mr. Mackenzie that the whole Sardinian court rejoice in the expectation of his arrival, notwithstanding they have been very well pleased with lord Bristol. To say truth, they are the only young men I have seen abroad that have found the secret of introducing themselves into the best company. All the others now living here (however dignified and distinguished), by herding together, and throwing away their money on worthless objects, have only acquired the glorious title of Golden Asses; and, since the birth of the Italian drama, Goldoni has adorned his scenes with *gli milordi Inglesi*, in the same manner as Moliere represented his Parisian marquises. If your agreeable brother-in-law is still at London, I desire you would wish him joy in my name. If it be no trouble to him, you may take that occasion of sending me some books, particularly two small volumes lately written by Mr. Horace Walpole.*

* Royal and Noble Authors, 8vo. 1758.

My dear child, I ask your pardon for the intolerable length of this trifling letter. You know age is tattling, and something should be forgiven to the sincere affection with which I am ever

Your most affectionate mother.

CVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, Oct. 13, 1758.

DEAR CHILD,

I AM sorry for the death of lord Carlisle.* He was my friend as well as acquaintance; a man of uncommon probity and good-nature. I thank you for your kind intention of sending me books, but let there be no more duplicates. As well as I love nonsense, I do not desire to have the same twice over—no translations—no periodical papers—though I confess some of the "World" entertain me very much, particularly lord Chesterfield and Horry Walpole; but, whenever I met Dodsley, I wished him *out of the world* with all my heart. The title was a very lucky one, being, as you see, productive of puns, "*world without end*," which is all the species of wit some people can either practise or understand. Smith † has lately married

* He died Sept. 4, 1758.

† Joseph Smith, esq. consul at Venice. He made a large collection of pictures and gems, which were purchased by his present majesty for 20,000*l*. The "Dactyliotheca Smithiana," in 2 vols. 4to. was published in 1765.

Murray's* sister, a beauteous virgin of forty, who, after having refused all the peers in England, because the nicety of her conscience would not permit her to give her hand when her heart was untouched, remained without a husband till the charms of that fine gentleman determined her to change her condition, who is only eighty-two. In short, they are, as lord Orrery says of Swift and company, "an illustrious group." I should be sorry to offend a man of such strict honour as lord H***sse, who, like a great politician, has provided for a worthless relation without expense. It has long been a maxim not to consider if a man be fit for a place, but if the place be fit for him; and we see the fruits of these Machiavelian proceedings.

I was well acquainted with Mr. Walpole at Florence, and indeed he was particularly civil to me. I am encouraged to ask a favour of him, if I did not know that few people have so good memories as to remember so many years backwards as have passed since I have seen him. If he has treated the character of queen Elizabeth with disrespect, all the women should tear him in pieces for abusing the glory of her sex.† Neither is it just to put her in the list of authors, having never published any thing, though we have Mr. Camden's authority that she wrote many valuable pieces, chiefly translations

* John Murray, esq. at that time the king's resident at Venice, afterwards ambassador at the Porte, and who died in the Lazaretto, at Venice, in 1777, upon his return to England.

† Alluding to the character of queen Elizabeth, in his Royal and Noble Authors.

from the Greek. I wish all monarchs would bestow their leisure hours on such studies: perhaps they would not be very useful to mankind; but it may be asserted, as a certain truth, that their own mind would be more improved than by the amusements of quadrille or cavagnole.

I desire you would thank your father for the china jars; if they arrive safely, they will do me great honour in this country. The patriarch died here lately. He had a large temporal estate; and, by long life and extreme parsimony, has left four hundred thousand sequins in his coffers, which is inherited by two nephews; and I suppose will be dissipated as scandalously as it was accumulated. The town is full of faction, for the election of his successor; and the ladies are always very active on these occasions. I have observed that they have ever had more influence in republics than in a monarchy. It is true a king has often a powerful mistress, but she is governed by some male favourite. In commonwealths, votes are easily acquired by the fair; and she who has most beauty or art has a great sway in the senate. I run on troubling you with stories very insignificant to you, and taking up your time, which I am very certain is taken up in matters of more importance than my old wives' tales. My dear child, God bless you and yours. I am, with the warmest sentiments of my heart, your most affectionate mother.

CIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Padua, Nov. 19, 1768.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM glad to hear lady Betty Mackenzie is so amiable. I have dined with her at the duke of Argyle's, and seen her several times, but she was then of an age when young ladies think silence becoming in the presence of their parents. Lady Mary,* hardly passed her childhood, was more free, and I confess was my favourite in the family. The rejoicings in this town, for the election of the pope,† who was archbishop of this city, are not yet over, and have been magnificent to the last degree; the illuminations, fire-works, and assemblies have been finer than any known of many years. I have had no share in them, going to bed at the hour they began. It is remarkable that the present pope‡ has his mother still living, at Venice; his father died only last winter. If he follows the steps of his predecessor, he will be a great blessing to his dominions. I could, with pleasure to myself, enlarge on the character of the deceased prelate, which was as extraordinary as that of the czar Peter, being equally superior to the prejudices of education; but you would think me bribed by the civilities

* Lady Mary Coke.

† Upon the death of cardinal Lambertini, Benedict XIV.

‡ Cardinal Rezzonico, Clement XIII.

I received from him. I had the honour
obliging message, by his particular orde
before that which brought news of his d

Lord Carlisle was the most intimate fr
father: they were of the same age; and
not been dedicated to retirement, would
one of the duke of Kingston's guardia
firmly believe, would have acted in a diff
ner from those who were entrusted, bein
his failings) a man of great honour.

I am very glad to hear of your father
mine is better than I ought to expect at
life. I believe Mr. Anderson talks partia
as to my looks; I know nothing of the
it is eleven years since I have seen my f
glass, and the last reflection I saw the
disagreeable, that I resolved to spare m
mortifications for the future, and shall
that resolution to my life's end. To i
pleasing amusements, and avoid all im
give disgust, is, in my opinion, the best
attain or confirm health. I ought to consi
and shorten my letter, while you are in a
that makes reading uneasy to you.

God bless you and yours, my dear chil
most ardent wish of your affectionate mo

CX.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, Dec. 11, 1758.

I ASSURE you I live as agreeably here as any stranger in my circumstances possibly can do; and, indeed, a repetition of all the civilities I have received here would sound more like vanity than truth. I am sensible that I owe a great part of them to Grimani, who is in the first esteem and authority in this republic; and, as he takes pains to appear my friend, his relations and allies, of both sexes (who are the most considerable people here), endeavour to oblige me in all sorts of ways. The carnival is expected to be more brilliant than common, from the great concourse of noble strangers. The princess of Holstein and the prince of Wolfenbuttle (nephew of the empress) are already arrived, and the electoral prince of Saxony is expected next week. If my age and humour would permit me much pleasure in public amusements, here are a great variety of them. I take as little share of them as I can.

> "Frui paratis, et valido mihi,
> Latöe, dones; et precor, integrâ
> Cum mente, nec turpem senectam
> Degere, nec citharâ carentem."
> *Hor. Od.* L. i. O. 31.

You see I have got a Horace, which is borrowed of the consul, who is a good scholar; but I am

very impatient for my own books. I could wish you to send me the cushions that were used at Constantinople; they would be very useful to me here. As to what regards * * *, I have long since fixed my opinion concerning him. Indeed I am not insensible of the misfortune, but I look upon it as the loss of a limb, which should cease to give solicitude by being irretrievable.

Lord Brudenel * is here, and appears to be in an extremely bad state of health, and unwilling to return to England, being apprehensive of the air. I fear his friends will have the affliction of losing him, as he seems highly disposed, if not actually fallen into a consumption. I have had a letter from Mr. Mackenzie, who is excessively liked at Turin. I cannot contrive to go there, but heartily wish I could contrive to see him and lady Betty in some other place. I am determined, on account of my health, to take some little jaunt next spring; perhaps on the side of the Tyrol, which I have never seen, but hear it is an exceedingly fine country. To say truth, I am tempted by the letters of lady F. Stewart and sir James. I never knew people more to my taste. They reside in a little town, only two days' journey from Padua, where it will be easy to find a lodging for the summer months; and I am sure of being pleased in their company. I have found, wherever I have travelled, that the pleasantest spots of ground have been in the valleys which are encompassed with high mountains

* John lord Brudenel, marquis of Monthermer, only son of George earl of Cardigan and duke of Montagu, was created lord Montagu of Boughton in 1762, and died unmarried in 1770.

CXI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, Feb. 21, 1759.

MY DEAR CHILD,

If half of the letters I have sent to you have reached you, I believe you think I have always a pen in my hand; but I am really so uneasy, by your long silence, I cannot forbear inquiring the reason of it, by all the methods I can imagine. My time of life is naturally inclined to fear; and though I resist (as well as I can) all the infirmities incident to age, I feel but too sensibly the impressions of melancholy when I have any doubt of your welfare. You fancy, perhaps, that the public papers give me information enough; and that, when I do not see in them any misfortune of yours, I ought to conclude you have none. I can assure you I never see any, excepting by accident. Our resident has not the good breeding to send them to me; and, after having asked for them once or twice, and being told they were engaged, I am unwilling to demand a trifle at the expense of thanking a man who does not desire to oblige me: indeed, since the ministry of Mr. Pitt, he is so desirous to signalize his zeal for the contrary faction, he is perpetually saying ridiculous things, to manifest his attachment; and, as he looks upon me (nobody knows why) to be the friend of a man I never saw, he has not visited me once this winter. The misfortune is not great. I

cannot help laughing at my being mistaken for a politician. I have often been so, though I ever thought politics far removed from my sphere. I cannot accuse myself of dabbling in them, even when I heard them talked over in all companies; but, as the old song says,

> Though through the wide world we should range,
> 'Tis in vain from our fortune to fly.

I forget myself, and tattle on, without remembering you are too much employed to throw away time on reading insignificant letters; you should, however, forgive them, in consideration of the real affection of your very loving mother.

CXII.

TO MR. WORTLEY.

Venice, Feb. 24, 1759.

I RETURN you many thanks for yours of the 5th instant. I never have received any in so short a time from England. I am, very sincerely, heartily glad to hear of your health, but will not trouble you with reading a long letter, which may be uneasy to you, when I write so often and fully to your daughter. I have not heard from her of some time: I hope her silence is not occasioned by any indisposition. I hear her and her family praised very much by every Briton that arrives here. I need not say what comfort I receive from it. It is now finer weather than I ever saw in the season (Naples

excepted); the sun shines with as much warmth as in May. I walk in my little garden every morning. I hope you do the same at Bath.

The carnival is now over, and we have no more ridotto or theatrical amusements. Diversions have taken a more private, perhaps a more agreeable, turn here. It is the fashion to have little houses of retreat, where the lady goes every evening, at seven or eight o'clock, and is visited by all her intimates of both sexes, which commonly amount to seventy or eighty persons, where they have play, concerts of music, sometimes dancing, and always a handsome collation. I believe you will think these little assemblies very pleasing; they really are so. Whoever is well acquainted with Venice must own that it is the centre of pleasure; not so noisy, and, in my opinion, more refined, than Paris. The young earl of Northampton * is now at Florence, and was here in the carnival. He is lively and good-natured, with what is called a pretty figure. I believe he is of a humour likely to fall in love with many; the first agreeable girl he meets with in London. I send this by a gentleman who is just returned from making a very extraordinary journey. I dined with him yesterday at general Graham's. He is a sensible man, and gives a good

* Charles Compton, seventh earl of Northampton, succeeded his uncle in 1758. He married lady Ann Somerset, daughter of Charles Noel, duke of Beaufort, and was appointed ambassador extraordinary to Venice, 1761. He died on his return from that embassy in 1763, leaving an only daughter, lady Elizabeth Compton, since married to lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish, youngest brother of William, fifth duke of Devonshire.

account of his plan. Almost all books are either defective or fabulous. I have observed that the only true intelligence of distant countries is to be had from those who have passed them, without a design of publishing their remarks.

CXIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, May 22, 1759.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM always pleased to hear from you, but particularly so when I have any occasion of congratulation. I sincerely wish you joy of your infants having gone happily through the small-pox. I had a letter from your father before he left London. He does not give so good an account of his spirits as you do, but I hope his journeys will restore them. I am convinced nothing is so conducive to health, and absolutely necessary to some constitutions. I am not surprised, as I believe you think I ought to be, at lord L***r's leaving his large estate to his lady, notwithstanding the contempt with which he always treated her, and her real inability of managing it. I expect you should laugh at me for the exploded notion of predestination, yet I confess I am inclined to be of the opinion that nobody makes their own marriage or their own will: it is what I have often said to the duchess of Marlborough when she has been telling me her last intentions, none of which she has performed; choosing lord Chesterfield for her executor, whose true character

she has many times enlarged upon. I could say much more to support this doctrine, if it would not lengthen my letter beyond a readable size.

Building is the general weakness of old people; I have had a twitch of it myself, though certainly it is the highest absurdity, and as sure a proof of dotage as pink-coloured ribands, or even matrimony. Nay, perhaps, there is more to be said in defence of the last; I mean in a childish old man: he may prefer a boy born in his own house, though he knows it is not his own, to disrespectful or worthless nephews or nieces. But there is no excuse for beginning an edifice he can never inhabit, or probably see finished. The duchess of Marlborough used to ridicule the vanity of it, by saying one might always live upon other people's follies: yet you see she built the most ridiculous house I ever saw, since it really is not habitable from the excessive damps; so true it is, the things that we would do, those do we not, and the things we would not do, those do we daily. I feel in myself a proof of this assertion, being much against my will at Venice, though I own it is the only great town where I can properly reside; yet here I find so many vexations, that, in spite of all my philosophy, and (what is more powerful) my phlegm, I am oftener out of humour than among my plants and poultry in the country. I cannot help being concerned at the success of iniquitous schemes, and grieve for oppressed merit. You, who see these things every day, think me as unreasonable, in making them matter of complaint, as if I seriously lamented the change of seasons. You should consider I have lived almost a hermit ten years, and the world is

as new to me as to a country girl transpor
Wales to Coventry. I know I ought to
lot very good that can boast of some since
among strangers.

Sir Wyndham Knatchbull, and his gove
de Vismes, are at length parted. I am v
for them both. I cannot help wishing w
young man, who really has merit, and w
been happy in a companion that sincer
him and studied his interest. My letter i
I am frightened at it myself. I never kn
to end when I write to you. Forgive it
the other infirmities of your affectionate n

CXIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Padua, June

MY DEAR CHILD,

I HAVE this minute received yours of May
glad the little picture pleased lady Mary.
true representation of the summer deshabil
Venetian ladies. I could heartily wish to
brother-in-law and lady Betty Mackenzie, a
that I have a thousand questions to ask
relation to their nephews and nieces. W
touches you is important to me. I fear I r
expect that satisfaction, as they are ob
reside at Turin; and I cannot resolve to a
a court, where old people always make an il
even though they may have business there.

Lord Fordwich * is arrived here: he made me a visit yesterday, and appears a well-disposed youth. Lord Brudenel continues here, and seems to have no desire to revisit his native land. I suppose you are now at Kew, with all your rising family around you: may they ever be blessings to you! I believe you, who see them every day, scarcely think more of them than I do.

This town is at present very full of company, though the opera is not much applauded. I have not yet seen it, nor do I intend to break my rest for its sake; it being about the hour I go to sleep. I continue my college-hours, by which custom I am excluded from many fashionable amusements; but in recompense, I have better health and spirits than many younger ladies, who pass their nights at the ridotto, and days in spleen for their losses there. Play is the general plague of Europe. I know no corner of it entirely free from the infection. I do not doubt but that the familiarities of the gaming-table contribute very much to that decay of politeness of which you complain; for the pouting and quarrels, which naturally arise from disputes there, must put an end to all complaisance, or even good-will towards each other. If they plead necessity, it is one proof among many that no one should trust their virtue to necessity, the force of which is never known till it is felt; and it is therefore one of our first duties to avoid the temptation of it. I am not pleading for avarice—far from it. A prudential care of one's own affairs, or to go farther, a desire to be in circumstances to do good to one's friends, is

* The late earl Cowper.

not only excusable, but highly laudable; never blamed but by those who would persuade others to throw away their money, in hopes to pick up a share of it. The greatest declaimers for disinterestedness I have ever known, have been themselves capable of the vilest actions, on the least view of profit; and the greatest instances of true generosity given by those who were regular in their expenses, and superior to the vanities in fashion. I believe you are tired of my dull moralities, but I confess I am in low spirits. My blessing to yours.

CXV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Padua, Aug. 10, 1759.

MY DEAR CHILD,

SINCE you tell me my letters (such as they are) are agreeable to you, I shall, for the future, indulge myself in thinking upon paper, when I write to you. There are preparations, at Venice, for a regatta: it can hardly be performed till the middle of next month. I shall remove thither to see it, though I have already seen that which was exhibited in compliment to the prince of Saxony. It is by far the finest sight in Europe, (not excepting our own coronations,) and it is hardly possible to give you a just notion of it by description. General Graham has shown me a letter from lord Bute, very obliging to me, and which gives a very good impression both of his head and heart, from the honest resolutions and just reflections that are in it. My time here is

entirely employed in riding, walking, and reading. I see little company, not being in a humour to join in their diversions. I feel greatly the loss of sir James Stewart and lady Fanny, whose conversation was equally pleasing and instructive. I do not expect to have it soon replaced, as there are few such couples. One of my best friends, at Venice, I believe your father remembers. He is signor Antonio Mocenigo, widower of that celebrated beauty, the procuratessa Mocenigo, and is eighty-two, in perfect health and spirits. His eloquence is much admired in the senate, where he has great weight. He still retains a degree of that figure, which once made him esteemed as one of the handsomest men in the republic. I am particularly proud of being admitted into the number of seven or eight friends, nearly of his own age, who pass their evenings with him.

I was as well acquainted with * * *'s *two first* wives as the great difference of our ages permitted; and I fancy they have both broken their hearts, by being chained to such a companion. It is really terrible for a well-bred virtuous young woman to be confined to the conversation of the object of her contempt. There is but one thing to be done in that case, which is a method I am sure you have observed practised by some ladies, with success. I need not name that they associate the husband with the lap-dog, and manage so, that they make just the same figure in the family. My lord and *Dell* tag after madam to all indifferent places, and stay at home together whenever she goes into company where they would be troublesome.

Compliments to lord Bute. I am to you both an affectionate mother.

CXVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Genoa, Dec. 8,

MY DEAR CHILD,

I RECEIVED yours of October 24, yesterday, gave me great pleasure, by the account of th health of you and yours; I need not say ho that is to my heart. I had the satisfaction entertaining letter from your father, out o many, by which I find he has had both bene amusement from his travels. I hope he i with you.

I find you have many wrong notions of which I do not wonder at. You can tak ideas of it only from books or travellers; th are generally antiquated or confined to tri servations, and the other yet more super they return no more instructed than they have been at home, by the help of a map. boys only remember where they met with th wine or the prettiest women; and the gov (I speak of the most learned amongst them only remarked situations and distances, or, at statues and edifices; as every girl that can French novel, and boy that can construe a in Terence, fancies that they have attained t French and Latin languages, when, God kno requires the study of a whole life to acquire fect knowledge of either of them: so, after (*as they* call it) of three years, round Europe *ple* think themselves qualified to give exact ac

of the customs, politics, and interests of the dominions they have gone through post; when a very long stay, a diligent inquiry, and a nice observation, are requisite even to a moderate degree of knowing a foreign country, especially here, where they are naturally very reserved. France, indeed, is more easily seen through; the French always talking of themselves, and the government being the same, there is little difference from one province to another; but, in Italy, the different laws make different customs and manners. There are many things very particular here, from the singularity of the government; some of which I do not care to touch upon, and some are still in use here, though obsolete in most other places, as the estates of all the great families being unalienable, as they were formerly in England. This would have made them very potent, if it were not balanced by another law, that divides whatever land the father dies possessed of among all the sons, the eldest having no advantage but the finest house and best furniture, which occasions numerous branches, and few large fortunes, with a train of consequences you may imagine. But I cannot let pass in silence the prodigious alteration, since Misson's writing, in regard to our sex. This reformation (or, if you please, deprivation) began so lately as the year 1732, when the French over-ran this part of Italy, but it has been carried on with such fervour and success, that the Italians go far beyond their patterns, the Parisian ladies, in the extent of their liberty. I am not so much surprised at the women's conduct, as I am amazed at the change in the men's sentiments. Jealousy, which was once a

point of honour among them, is exploded to that degree, that it is become the most infamous and ridiculous of all characters; and you cannot more affront a gentleman, than to suppose him capable of it. Divorces are also introduced, and frequent enough; they have long been in fashion at Genoa, several of the finest and greatest ladies there having two husbands alive.

I am afraid you will think this a long letter; but you tell me that you are without company, and in solitude, though yours appears to me to be a sort of paradise. You have an agreeable habitation, a pleasant garden, a man you love and who loves you, and are surrounded with a numerous and hopeful progeny. May they all prove comforts to your age! That and all other blessings are daily wished for you by, my dear child,

Your affectionate mother.

CXVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, March 18, 1760.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM afraid some letters both of yours and m
are lost, nor am I much surprised at it, seeing
managements here. In this world much mu
suffered, and we ought all to follow the r
Epictetus, "Bear and forbear." General W

...l Wolfe was killed at the siege of Que

is to be lamented, but not pitied. I am of your opinion, that compassion is only owing to his mother and intended bride, who I think the greatest sufferers, however sensible I am of a parent's tenderness. Disappointments in youth are those which are felt with the greatest anguish, when we are all in expectation of happiness, perhaps not to be found in this life. I am very much diverted with the adventures of the three graces who are coming to London, and am heartily sorry their mother has not learning enough to write memoirs. She might make the fortune of half a dozen Dodsleys. The youngest girl (called here *Bettina*) is taller than the duchess of Montagu, and as red and white as any German alive. If she has sense enough to follow good instructions, she will be irresistible, and may produce very glorious novelties. Our great minister has her picture in his collection—*basta!*

My health is better than I can reasonably expect at my age, but my life is so near a conclusion, that where or how I pass it (if innocently) is almost become indifferent to me. I have outlived the greatest part of my acquaintance; and, to say the truth, a return to crowd and bustle, after my long retirement, would be disagreeable to me. Yet if I could be of use either to your father or your family, I would venture the shortening the insignificant days of your affectionate mother.

CXVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, Nov. 6, 1760.

MY DEAR CHILD,

I AM afraid you will think me very troublesome, and that I do not enough consider the various duties you are now obliged to. Indeed I am thoroughly sensible you have little time to throw away, but I am (privately) solicited to mention a thing to you, which, in my opinion, I ought not to omit.

The senate have appointed two procurators of St. Mark to compliment his majesty on his accession. They are of the first families here, Contarini and Morosini, and are neither of them married. Madam Capello has been so ridiculous, both at London and Rome, that I believe they will not often send ambassadresses. These cavaliers are of such a character as will do honour to their country: they are vastly rich, and desirous to show their magnificence in the court of England. They apprehend (I know not why) that they shall be thanked and not permitted to come. I am far from a politician, God knows, but it seems to me, both in public and private life, civilities should never be refused, when they are sincerely meant as proofs of respect. I have no personal interest in this affair, nor can receive any advantage from their embassy, but an opportunity of sending some trifles to my grand-daughter, which I hoped to do

by lord Titchfield,* who has been long at Turin. I am now told he will not take Venice in his road, when he returns to London.

I am sorry to tell you I fear general Graham is in a declining state of health. I suppose you know poor Mr. Hamilton is at Petersburgh. I am ever, my dear child,

Your most affectionate mother.

CXIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF BUTE.

Venice, Nov. 18, 1760.

MY DEAR CHILD,

THE three fine ladies I mentioned set out for London three days ago. The father's name was W*ne, of Yorkshire, and the signora Madre is a Greek, and I believe once remarkably handsome. I should have said much more about them, if you had been at Caenwood, and in full leisure to read novels. The story deserves the pen of my dear Smollett, who, I am sorry, disgraces his talent by writing those stupid romances, commonly called history. Shebbeare does yet worse, and dabbles in filthy politics, instead of making more Lydias for my entertainment.

I thank God I can live here in a quiet retirement. I am very far from any view beyond tranquillity; and if I have been so much vexed at M**'s behaviour, I desire not his ruin. I am told he gives

* The late duke of Portland.

political reasons for his conduct towards me, which, if true, I ought to pardon him by all the maxims of modern ethics.

I give you thanks for your information of the death of the king. You may imagine how I am affected by it, but I will not trouble you at this time with a long letter.

My health is very precarious; may yours long continue, and the prosperity of your family. I bless God that I have lived to see you so well established, and am ready to sing my "Nunc dimittis" with pleasure.

My dear child, I am ever
Your affectionate mother.

LETTERS

TO THE

COUNTESS OF MAR,

WRITTEN PREVIOUS

TO THE

AUTHOR'S RESIDENCE IN ITALY.



LETTERS

TO

THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

CXX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, 1720.

I HAVE had no answer, dear sister, to a long letter that I writ to you a month ago; however, I shall continue letting you know (*de temps en temps*) what passes in this corner of the world, until you tell me it is disagreeable. I shall say little of the death of our great minister, because the papers say so much.* I suppose that the same faithful historians give you regular accounts of the growth and spreading of the inoculation for the small-pox, which is become almost a general practice, attended with great success. I spend my time in a small snug set of dear intimates, and go very little into the *grande monde*, which has always had my hearty contempt I see

* James Craggs, esq. secretary of state, died February 15, 1720, aged 35.

sometimes Mr. Congreve, and very seldom Mr. Pope, who continues to embellish his house at Twickenham. He has made a subterranean grotto, which he has furnished with looking-glasses, and *they tell me* it has a very good effect. I here send you some verses addressed to Mr. Gay, who wrote him a congratulatory letter on the finishing his house. I stifled them here, and I beg they may die the same death at Paris, and never go further than your closet:

"Ah, friend, 'tis true—this truth you lovers know—
In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow;
In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes
Of hanging mountains, and of sloping greens:
Joy lives not here; to happier seats it flies,
And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.

What are the gay parterre, the chequer'd shade,
The morning bower, the evening colonnade,
But soft recesses of uneasy minds,
To sigh unheard in, to the passing winds?
So the struck deer in some sequester'd part
Lies down to die, the arrow at his heart;
He, stretch'd unseen in coverts hid from day,
Bleeds drop by drop, and pants his life away."*

My paper is done, and I beg you to send my lustring of what colour you please.

* In Pope's works the last eight lines only are published as a fragment. After his quarrel with lady Mary Wortley Montagu, he disingenuously suppressed the compliment conveyed in the preceding.

CXXI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, 1721.

DEAR SISTER,

My eyes are very bad to-day, from having been such a beast to sit up late last night; however, I will write to inquire after your health, though at the expense of my own. I forgot whether I told you lord Dorchester* and our sister Caroline have been inoculated, and are perfectly well after it. I saw her grace the duchess of Kingston yesterday, who told me that she heard from you last post, and that you have been ill, but are recovered. My father is going to the Bath, sir William Wyndham is dying, lady Darlington and lady Mohun are packing up for the next world, and the rest of our acquaintance playing the fool in this *à l'ordinaire*. Among the rest a very odd whim has entered the little head of Mrs. Murray; do you know that she will not visit me this winter? I, according to the usual integrity of my heart, and simplicity of my manners, with great *naïveté*, desired to explain with her on the subject, and she answered that she was convinced that I had made the ballad upon her, and was resolved never to speak to me again. I answered (which was true) that I utterly defied her to have any one single proof of my making it, without being able to get any thing from her, but

* Afterward the late duke of Kingston.

repetitions that she knew it. I cannot suppose that any thing you have said should occasion this rupture, and the repetition of a quarrel is always so ridiculous on both sides, that you would oblige me in mentioning it to her, for it is now at that pretty pass, she will not curtsy to me wherever she meets me, which is superlatively silly (if she really knew it), after a suspension of resentment for two years together. To turn the discourse on something more amusing, we had a masquerade last night, where I did not fail to trifle away a few hours agreeably enough, and fell into company with a quite new man, that has a great deal of wit, joined to a diabolical person: it is my lord I***e, whom it is impossible to love, and impossible not to be entertained with; that species are the most innocent part of the creation, *et ne laisse pas de faire plaisir*. I wish all mankind were of that class. Dear sister, I would give the world to converse with you; but, *helas!* the sea is between us.

CXXII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, 1721.

I HAVE already writ you so many letters, dear sister, that if I thought you had silently received them all, I do not know whether I should trouble you with any more; but I flatter myself, that they have most of them miscarried: I had rather have my labours lost, than accuse you of unkindness. I send

this by lady Lansdown,* who I hope will have no curiosity to open my letter, since she will find in it that I never saw any thing so miserably altered in my life: I really did not know her:

So must the fairest face appear,
When youth and years are flown;
So sinks the pride of the parterre,
When something over-blown.

My daughter makes such a noise in the room, it is impossible to go on in this heroic style. I hope yours is in great bloom of beauty. I fancy to myself we shall have the pleasure of seeing them cotoasts of the next age. I do not at all doubt but they will outshine all the little Auroras of this, for there never was such a parcel of ugly girls as reign at present. In recompense, they are very kind, and the men very merciful, and content in this dearth of charms with the poorest stuff in the world. This you would believe, had I but time to tell you the tender loves of lord Romney and lady Carmichill; they are so fond, it does one's heart good to see them. There are some other pieces of scandal not unentertaining, particularly the earl of S****r and lady M. H*****d, who, being your acquaintance, I thought would be some comfort to you. The town improves daily; all people seem to make the best of the talent God has given them.

The race of Roxbourghs, Thanets, and Suffolks, are utterly extinct: and every thing appears with

* Lady Grace Granville, youngest daughter of John lord Lansdown, and wife of George lord Carteret, was created countess of Granville, Jan. 1, 1715. She died 1744.

that edifying plain dealing, that I may say, in the words of the Psalmist, "there is no sin in Israel."

I have already thanked you for my night-gown, but it is so pretty it will bear being twice thanked for.

CXXIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, 1721.

I CANNOT help being very sorry, for your sake, to hear that you persist in your design of retiring; though, as to my own part, I have no view of conversing with you where you now are, and ninety leagues are but a small addition to the distance between us. London was never so gay as at present; but I do not know how, I would fain be ten years younger; I love flattery so well, I would fain have some circumstances of probability added to it, that I might swallow it with comfort. The reigning duchess of Marlborough* has entertained the the town with concerts of Bononcini's composition very often; but she and I are not in that degree of friendship to have *me* often invited. Various are the persecutions I have endured this winter, in all which I remain neuter, and shall certainly go to Heaven from the passive meekness of my temper. Madame Villette has been the favourite of the

* Henrietta countess of Godolphin, and afterward duchess of Marlborough.

town, and by a natural transition is grown the aversion; she has now nobody attached to her suite but the viracious lord Bathurst,* with whom I have been well and ill ten times within two months. The duchess of Kingston† is preparing for the Bath. I live in a sort of solitude, that wants very little of being what I would have it. Lady J. Wharton is to be married to Mr. Holt, which I am sorry for, to see a young woman, whom I really think one of the most agreeable girls upon earth, so vilely misplaced. But where are people matched? I suppose we shall all come right in Heaven as in a country dance; the hands are strangely given and taken whilst they are in motion, and at last all meet their partners when the jig is done.

I am ever affectionately yours.

CXXIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR

Twickenham, 1721.

I DO verily believe, my dear sister, that this is the twelfth, if not the thirteenth, letter I have written since I had the pleasure of hearing from you. It is

* Allen lord Bathurst, the well-known friend and patron of Pope, Swift, and Gay. He died in 1774, at the age of ninety-one, having enjoyed health, genius, and prosperity, in a very singular degree.

† Lady Isabella Bentinck, second wife of Evelyn duke of Kingston.

an uncomfortable thing to have precious time spent, and one's wit neglected in this manner. Sometimes I think you are fallen into that utter indifference for all things on this side the water, that you have no more curiosity for the affairs of London than for those of Pekin; and if that be the case, it is downright impertinence to trouble you with news. But I cannot cast off the affectionate concern I have for you, and consequently must put you in mind of me whenever I have any opportunity. The bearer of this epistle is our cousin; his shoulder-knot last birth-day made many a pretty gentleman's heart ache with envy, and his addresses have made Miss Howard the happiest of her highness's honourable virgins. I made a sort of resolution at the beginning of my letter not to trouble you with the mention of what passes here, since you receive it with so much coldness. But I find it is impossible to forbear telling you the metamorphoses of some of your acquaintance, which appear as wondrous to me as any in Ovid. Would any one believe that lady H*****ss is a beauty, and in love? and that Mrs. Anastasia Robinson is at the same time a prude and a kept mistress? and these things in spite of nature and fortune. The first of these ladies is tenderly attached to the polite Mr. M***, and sunk in all the joys of happy love, notwithstanding she wants the use of her two hands by a rheumatism, and he has an arm that he cannot move. I wish I could tell you the particulars of this amour, which seems to me as curious as that between two oysters, and as well worth the serious attention of the naturalists. The second heroine has engaged half the town in arms, from the nicety

of her virtue, which was not able to bear the too near approach of Senesino in the opera; and her condescension in her accepting of lord Peterborough * for her champion, who has signalized both his love and courage upon this occasion in as many instances as ever Don Quixote did for Dulcinea. Poor Senesino, like a vanquished giant, was forced to confess upon his knees that Anastasia was a nonpareil of virtue and beauty. Lord Stanhope, as dwarf to the said giant, joked on his side, and was challenged for his pains. Lord Delawar was lord Peterborough's second; my lady miscarried—the whole town divided into parties on this important point. Innumerable have been the disorders between the two sexes on so great an account, besides half the house of peers being put under an arrest. By the providence of Heaven, and the wise cares of his majesty, no bloodshed ensued. However, things are now tolerably accommodated; and the fair lady rides through the town in the shining berlin of her hero, not to reckon the more solid advantage of 100*l.* a month, which it is said he allows her. I will send you a letter by the count Caylus,† whom, if you do not know already, you will thank me for introducing to you. He is a Frenchman, and no fop; which, beside the curiosity of it, is one of the prettiest things in the world.

In general, gallantry was never in so elevated a figure as at present. Twenty very pretty fellows

* He married Mrs. Anastasia Robinson 1735, and died at Lisbon in the same year, aged seventy-seven.

† Afterwards so justly famed in the literary world for the study of Grecian and Roman antiquities.

(the duke of Wharton being president and chief director) have formed themselves into a committee of gallantry, who call themselves *Schemers;* and meet regularly three times a week, to consult on gallant schemes for the advancement and advantage of that branch of happiness. I consider the duty of a true Englishwoman is to do honour to her native country; and that it would be a sin against the pious love I bear to the land of my nativity, to confine the renown due to the schemers within the small extent of this little island, which ought to be spread wherever men can sigh, or women can wish. It is true they have the envy and the curses of the old and ugly of both sexes, and a general persecution from all *old* women; but this is no more than all reformations must expect in their beginning.

CXXV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, 1721.

DEAR SISTER,

I WAS very glad to hear from you, though there was something in your letters very monstrous and shocking. I wonder with what conscience you can talk to me of your being an old woman; I beg I may hear no more of it. For my part, I pretend to be as young as ever, and really am as young as needs to be, to all intents and purposes. I attribute all this to your living so long at Chatton, and fancy a week at Paris will correct such wild imaginations, and set things in a better light. My cure for low-

ness of spirits is not drinking nasty water, but galloping all day, and a moderate glass of Champaigne at night in good company; and I believe this regimen, closely followed, is one of the most wholesome that can be prescribed, and may save one a world of filthy doses, and more filthy doctor's fees at the year's end. I rode to Twickenham last night, and, after so long a stay in town, am not sorry to find myself in my garden. Our neighbourhood is much improved by the removal of some old maids, and the arrival of some fine gentlemen, amongst whom are lord Middleton and sir J. Gifford, who, perhaps, are your acquaintances: they live with their aunt, lady Westmoreland; and we endeavour to make the country agreeable to one another.

Doctor Swift and Johnny Gay are at Pope's, and their conjunction has produced a ballad, which, if nobody else has sent you, I will; being never better pleased than when I am endeavouring to amuse my dear sister, and ever yours.

CXXVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1723.

DEAR SISTER,

I SENT you a long letter by the duchess of Montagu; though I have had no answer, I cannot resolve to leave London without writing another. I go to-morrow to Twickenham, where I am occupied in some alterations of my house and gardens. I believe I have told you we bought it last

year, and there is some sort of pleasure in showing one's own fancy upon one's own ground. If you please to send my night-gown to Mr. Hughes, an English banquier at Paris, directed for madame Cantillon, it will come safe to my hands; she is a new neighbour of mine, has a very handsome house in the village, and herself eclipses most of our London beauties: you know how fond we are of novelty, besides that she is really very pretty, and does not want understanding, and I have a thousand commodities in her acquaintance. Mrs. Davenant is returned from Genoa, and I have the pleasure of an agreeable intimacy with her: so much for my acquaintance. Lady Byng has inoculated both her children, and is big with child herself; the operation is not yet over, but I believe they will do very well. Since that experiment has not yet had any ill effect, the whole town are doing the same thing; and I am so much pulled about and solicited to visit people, that I am forced to run into the country to hide myself. There is a ridiculous marriage on the point of conclusion that diverts me much. You know lady Mary Sanderson; she is making over her discreet person and 1500*l.* a-year jointure to the tempting embrace of the noble earl of Pembroke, aged 73.*

* This marriage never took place.

CXXVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, 1723.

DEAR SISTER,

I HAVE written so many letters which you say you have not received, that I suppose you will not receive this; however, I will acquit myself to my own conscience as a good Christian ought to do. I am sure I can never be really wanting in any expression of affection to you, to whom I can never forget what I owe in many respects. Our mutual acquaintance are exceedingly dispersed, and I am engaged in a new set, whose ways would not be entertaining to you, since you know not the people. Mrs. Murray is still at Castle Howard: I am at Twickenham, where there is, at this time, more company than at London. Your poor soul, Mrs. Johnston, is returned into our neighbourhood, and sent to me to carry her to Richmond-court tomorrow, but I begged to be excused: she is still in sad pickle. I think Mr. and Madame Harvey are at lord Bristol's. *A-propos* of that family: the countess is come out a new creature; she has left off the dull occupations of hazard and basset, and is grown young, blooming, coquet, and gallant; and, to show she is fully sensible of the errors of her past life, and resolved to make up for time misspent, she has two lovers at a time, and is equally wickedly talked of for the gentle colonel Cotton, and the superfine Mr. Braddocks. Now I think this

the greatest compliment in nature to her own lord; since it is plain that, when she will be false to him, she is forced to take two men in his stead, and that no one mortal has merit enough to make up for him. Poor lady G**** is parting from her discreet spouse for a mere trifle. She had a mind to take the air this spring in a new yacht, which lord Hillsborough built for many good uses, and which has been the scene of much pleasure and pain: she went in company with his lordship, Fabrice, Mr. Cook, lady Litchfield,* and her sister, as far as Greenwich, and from thence as far as the mouth of the Nore; when, to the great surprise of the good company, who thought it impossible the wind should not be as fair to bring them back as it was to carry them thither, they found there was no possibility of returning that night. Lady G****, in all the concern of a good wife, desired her lord might be informed of her safety, and that she was no way blameable in staying out all night. Fabrice writ a most gallant letter to lord G****; concluding that Mr. Cook presents his humble service to him, and let him know (in case of necessity) his lady was in town: but his lordship not liking the change, I suppose, carried the letter straight to the king's majesty, who not being at leisure to give him an audience, he sent it in open by Mahomet; though it is hard to guess what sort of redress he intended to petition for—the nature of the thing being such, that, had he complained he was no cuckold, his majesty at least might have prevailed

* Frances, daughter of sir John Hales, of Woodchurch, Kent.

hat some of his court might confer that dignity ıpon him; but, if he was, neither king, council, ıor the two houses of parliament, could make it ıull and of none effect. This public rupture is ıucceeded by a treaty of separation; and here is all he scandal that is uppermost in my head. I should ıe glad to contribute any way to your entertainnent, and am very sorry you stand in so much need ›f it. I am ever yours.

I wish you would think of my lustring, for I am n terrible want of linings.

CXXVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1723.

DEAR SISTER,

I HAVE written to you twice since I received yours in answer to that I sent by Mr. de Caylus; but I believe none of what I send by the post ever come to your hands, nor ever will while they are directed to Mr. Waters, for reasons that you may easily guess. I wish you would give me a safer direction; it is very seldom I can have the opportunity of a private messenger, and it is very often that I have a mind to write to you. If you have not heard of the duchess of Montagu's intended journey, you will be surprised at your manner of receiving this, since I send it by one of her servants: she does not design to see any body, nor any thing, at Paris, and talks of going from Montpellier to Italy. I have a

tender esteem for her, and am heartily concerned to lose her conversation, yet I cannot condemn her resolution. I am yet in this wicked town, but purpose to leave it as soon as the parliament rises. Mrs. Murray and all her satellites have so seldom fallen in my way, I can say little about them. Your old friend Mrs. Louther is still fair and young, and in pale pink every night in the parks; but, after being highly in favour, poor I am in utter disgrace, without my being able to guess wherefore, except she fancied me the author or abettor of two vile ballads written on her dying adventure, which I am so innocent of, that I never saw them. *A-propos* of ballads, a most delightful one is said or sung in most houses about our dearly beloved plot, which has been laid first to Pope, and secondly to me, when, God knows, we have neither of us wit enough to make it. Mrs. Harvey lies-in of a female child. Lady Rich is happy in dear sir Robert's absence, and the polite Mr. Holt's return to his allegiance, who, though in a treaty of marriage with one of the prettiest girls in town (lady J. Wharton), appears better with her than ever. Lady B. Manners is on the brink of matrimony with a Yorkshire Mr. Monkton of 3000*l.* per annum. It is a match of the young duchess's making, and, she thinks, matter of great triumph over the two coquet beauties, who can get nobody to have and to hold: they are decayed to a piteous degree, and so neglected, that they are grown constant and particular to the two ugliest fellows in London. Mrs. P*** condescends to be publicly kept by the noble earl of Cadogan: whether Mr. P*** has a pad nag deducted out of the profits for his share I cannot tell,

but he appears very well satisfied with it. This is, I think, the whole state of love: as to that of wit, it splits itself into ten thousand branches: poets increase and multiply to that stupendous degree, you see them at every turn, even in embroidered coats and pink-coloured top-knots; making verses is become almost as common as taking snuff, and God can tell what miserable stuff people carry about in their pockets, and offer to all their acquaintances, and you know one cannot refuse reading and taking a pinch. This is a very great grievance, and so particularly shocking to me, that I think our wise lawgivers should take it into consideration, and appoint a fast-day, to beseech Heaven to put a stop to this epidemical disease, as they did last year for the plague with great success.

Dear sister, adieu: I have been very free in this letter, because I think I am sure of its going safe. I wish my night-gown may do the same:—I only choose that as most convenient to you; but, if it was equally so, I had rather the money was laid out in plain lustring, if you could send me eight yards at a time of different colours, designing it for linings; but if this scheme is impracticable, send me a night-gown *à-la-mode*.

CXXIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenha

I AM very sorry, dear sister, that you are i
láncholy a way, but I hope a return to l
revive your spirits: I had much rather l
London, but I do not presume upon so m
piness. I was last night at the play *en fa*
the most literal sense; my sister Gower
me thither in company of all her childr
lady F. Pierrepont at their head. My th
Leveson, Jenny by name,* will come out
beauty; she is really like the duchess of
berry. As for news, the last wedding i
Peg Pelham,† and I think I have never
comfortable a prospect of happiness; acc
all appearance, she cannot fail of being a
six weeks at farthest, and accordingly she
so good a housewife as to line her weddin
with black. Assemblies rage in this pa
world; there is not a street in town fi
them, and some spirited ladies go to se
night. You need not question but love
flourish under these encouragements: I
then peep upon these things with the sa

* Hon. Jane Leveson Gower died unmarried
1737.

† Hon. Margaret Pelham, married to sir John
bart. of Michel Grove, in Sussex, and died in 175

ness I would do on a moving picture; I laugh at some of the motions, wonder at others, &c. and then retire to the elected few, that have ears and hear, but mouths have they and speak not. One of these chosen, to my great sorrow, will soon be at Paris; I mean Stafford, who talks of removing next April: she promises to return, but I had rather she did not go.

CXXX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, Oct. 20, 1723.

I AM heartily sorry to have the pleasure of hearing from you lessened by your complaints of uneasiness, which I wish with all my soul I was capable of relieving, either by my letters or any other way. My life passes in a kind of indolence which is now and then awakened by agreeable moments; but pleasures are transitory, and the groundwork of every thing in England stupidity, which is certainly owing o the coldness of this vile climate. I envy you the erene air of Paris, as well as many other conniences there: what between the things one can- t do, and the things one must not do, the time t dully lingers on, though I make as good a shift many of my neighbours. To my great grief, ne of my best friends have been extremely ill; , in general, death and sickness have never been e frequent than now. You may imagine poor ntry droops; and, except in the Elysian shades ichmond, there is no such thing as love or

pleasure. It is said there is a fair lady retired for having taken too much of it: for my part they are not at all cooked to my taste; and I have very little share in the diversions there, which, except seasoned with wit, or at least vivacity, will not go down with me, who have not altogether so voracious an appetite as I once had: I intend, however, to shine and be fine on the birth-night, and review the figures there. My poor friend, the young duchess of Marlborough,* I am afraid, has exposed herself to a most violent ridicule; she is as much embarrassed with the loss of her expected child and as much ashamed of it, as ever a dairy maid was with the getting one.

I desire you will say something very pretty to your daughter in my name: notwithstanding the great gulf that is at present between us, I hope to wait on her to an opera one time or other. I suppose you know our uncle Fielding† is dead: I regret him prodigiously.

* Henrietta, eldest daughter of John duke of Marborough, married to Francis earl of Godolphin, and upon the death of her father, in 1722, succeeded to his honours she was the particular friend of Congreve, who bequeath her 10,000*l.*

† William Fielding, esq. second son of W. earl of Desbigh, gentleman of the bedchamber and deputy comptrol of the household, died Sept. 1723.

CXXXI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

October 31, 1723.

I WRITE to you at this time piping hot from the birth-night; my brain warmed with all the agreeable ideas that fine clothes, fine gentlemen, brisk tunes, and lively dances, can raise there. It is to be hoped that my letter will entertain you; at least you will certainly have the freshest account of all passages on that glorious day. First you must know that I led up the ball, which you will stare at; but what is more, I believe in my conscience I made one of the best figures there; to say truth, people are grown so extravagantly ugly, that we old beauties are forced to come out on show-days, to keep the court in countenance. I saw Mrs. Murray there, through whose hands this epistle will be conveyed; I do not know whether she will make the same compliment to you that I do. Mrs. West was with her, who is a great prude, having but two lovers at a time: I think those are lord Haddington and Mr. Lindsay; the one for use, the other for show.

The world improves in one virtue to a violent degree, I mean plain-dealing. Hypocrisy being, as the Scripture declares, a damnable sin, I hope our publicans and sinners will be saved by the open profession of the contrary virtue. I was told by a very good author, who is deep in the secret, that at this very minute there is a bill cooking-up at a

hunting-seat in Norfolk,* to have *not* taken out of the commandments and clapped into the creed, the ensuing session of parliament. This bold attempt for the liberty of the subject is wholly projected by Mr. Walpole, who proposed it to the secret committee in his parlour. William Young† seconded it, and answered for all his acquaintance voting right to a man: Doddington‡ very gravely objected, that the obstinacy of human nature was such, that he feared when they had positive commands to do so, perhaps people would not commit adultery and bear false witness against their neighbours with the readiness and cheerfulness they do at present. This objection seemed to sink deep into the minds of the greatest politicians at the board, and I do not know whether the bill will not be dropped, though it is certain it might be carried on with great ease, the world being entirely "*revenue du bagatelle*," and honour, virtue, reputation, &c. which we used to hear of in our nursery, are as much laid aside and forgotten as crumpled ribands. To speak plainly, I am very sorry for the forlorn state of matrimony, which is as much ridiculed by our young ladies as it used to be by young fellows: in short, both sexes have found the inconveniences of it, and the appellation of rake is as genteel in a woman as a man of quality; it is no scandal to say miss * * *, the maid of honour, looks very well now she is out again, and poor Biddy Noel has ne-

* Houghton; Mr. (afterwards sir Robert) Walpole's, then prime minister.

† Sir William Young.

‡ George Bubb Doddington, afterward lord Melcomb-Regis, whose Diary has been published.

en quite well since her last confinement. You imagine we married women look very silly; ave nothing to excuse ourselves, but that it done a great while ago, and we were very g when we did it. This is the general state of s: as to particulars, if you have any curiosity ings of that kind, you have nothing to do but k me questions, and they shall be answered to est of my understanding; my time never being d more agreeably than when I am doing some- ; obliging to you: this is truth, in spite of all eaux, wits, and witlings in Great Britain.

CXXXII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1724.

AR SISTER,

NNOT positively fix a time for my waiting on at Paris; but I do verily believe I shall make a thither, sooner or later. This town improves iety every day; the young people are younger they used to be, and all the old are grown g. Nothing is talked of but entertainments of ntry by land and water, and we insensibly be- o taste all the joys of arbitrary power. Politics no more; nobody pretends to wince or kick r their burthens; but we go on cheerfully with bells at our ears, ornamented with ribands, and ly contented with our present condition: so h for the general state of the nation. The last ure that fell in my way was madame Sevigné's

Letters; very pretty they are, but I assert, without the least vanity, that mine will be full as entertaining forty years hence. I advise you, therefore, to put none of them to the use of waste paper. You say nothing to me of the change of your ministry: I thank you for your silence on that subject; I do not remember myself ever child enough to be concerned who reigned in any part of the earth. I am more touched at the death of poor miss Chiswell, who is carried off by the small-pox. I am so oddly made, that I never forget the tendernesses contracted in my infancy; and I think of any past play-fellow with a concern that few people feel for their present favourites. After giving you melancholy by this tragedy, it is but reasonable I should conclude with a farce, that I may not leave you in ill humour. I have so good an opinion of your taste, to believe harlequin in person will never make you laugh so much as the earl of S * * *'s furious passion for lady Walpole* (aged fourteen and some months). Mrs. M * * *t undertook to bring the business to bear, and provided the opportunity (a great ingredient you will say); but the young lady proved skittish. She did not only turn this heroic flame into present ridicule, but exposed all his generous sentiments, to divert her husband and father-in-law. His lordship is gone to Scotland; and if there was any body wicked enough to write upon it, there is a subject worthy the pen of the best ballad-maker in Grub-street.

* Margaret, daughter and heir of Samuel Rolle, esq. of Haynton, co. Devon, married to Robert lord Walpole, March 26, 1784.

CXXXIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1725.

I THINK this is the first time of my life that a letter of yours has lain by me two posts unanswered. You will wonder to hear that short silence is occasioned by not having a moment unemployed at Twickenham; but I pass many hours on horseback, and I will assure you, ride stag-hunting, which I know you will stare to hear of. I have arrived to vast courage and skill that way, and am as well pleased with it as with the acquisition of a new sense; his royal highness hunts in Richmond park, and I make one of the *beau monde* in his train. I desire you, after this account, not to name the word old woman to me any more: I approach to fifteen nearer than I did ten years ago, and am in hopes to improve every year in health and vivacity. Lord Bolingbroke is returned to England, and is to do the honours at an assembly at lord Berkley's the ensuing winter. But the most surprising news is lord B * * *t's assiduous court, which fills the coffee-houses with profound speculations. But I, who smell a rat at a considerable distance, do believe in private that Mrs. H * * *d and his lordship have a friendship that borders upon "the tender;" and though in histories learned, ignorance attributes all to cunning or to chance,

> Love in that grave disguise does often smile,
> Knowing the cause was kindness all the while.

I am in hopes your king of France behaves better

than our duke of B * * *d; who, by the care of a pious mother, certainly preserved his virginity to his marriage bed, where he was so much disappointed in his fair bride (who, though his own inclinations, could not bestow on him those expressless raptures he had figured to himself), that he already pukes at the very name of her, and determines to let his estate go to his brother, rather than * * * * * * * * *.

N. B. This is true history, and I think the most extraordinary that has happened in this last age. This comes of living till sixteen without a competent knowledge either of practical or speculative anatomy, and literally thinking fine ladies composed of lilies and roses. *A-propos* of the best red and white to be had for money; lady Hervey is more delightful than ever, and such a politician, that if people were not blind to merit, she would govern the nation. Mrs. Murray has got a new lover in the most accomplished Mr. Doddington—so far for the progress of love. That of wit has taken a very odd course, and is making the tour of Ireland, from whence we have packets of ballads, songs, petitions, panegyrics, &c.: so powerful is the influence of lord Carteret's wit, and my lady's beauty, the Irish rhyme, that never rhymed before.

Adieu, dear sister; I take a sincere part in all that relates to you, and am ever yours. I beg, as the last favour, that you would make some small inquiry, and let me know the minute lord Finch * is at Paris.

* Afterward earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham, comptroller of the household to George II.

CXXXIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, 1725.

I AM now at the same distance from London that you are from Paris, and could fall into solitary amusements with a good deal of taste; but I resist it, as a temptation of Satan, and rather turn my endeavours to make the world as agreeable to me as I can, which is the true philosophy; that of despising it is of no use but to hasten wrinkles. I ride a good deal, and have got a horse superior to any two-legged animal, he being without a fault. I work like an angel. I receive visits upon idle days, and I shade my life as I do my tent-stitch, that is, make as easy transitions as I can from business to pleasure; the one would be too flaring and gaudy without some dark shades of the other; and if I worked altogether in the grave colours, you know it would be quite dismal. Miss Skerret is in the house with me, and lady Stafford has taken a lodging at Richmond: as their ages are different, and both agreeable in their kind, I laugh with the one, or reason with the other, as I happen to be in a gay or serious humour; and I manage my friends with such a strong yet a gentle hand, that they are both willing to do whatever I have a mind to.

My daughter presents her duty to you, and service to lady Frances,* who is growing to womanhood apace: I long to see her and you, and am not destitute of wandering designs to that purpose.

* Who afterward was the wife of her cousin, John Erskine, esq.

TO THE COUN[illegible] Cavendish-square,

I AM heartily sorry, dear sister, for all that dis-
pleases you, and for this time admit of your excuses
for silence: but I give you warning *c'est pour la*
dernière fois; to say truth, they do not seem ve
reasonable; whatever keeps one at home natura
inclines one to write, especially when you can f
a friend so much pleasure as your letters alway
to me. Miss Skerret* staid all the remainder o
summer with me, and we are now come to
where variety of things happen every day.
and I have an immortal quarrel; which, th
resolve never to forgive, I can hardly forbea
ing at. An acquaintance of mine is marrie
I wish very well to: Sophia has been pl
this occasion, to write the most infam
that ever was written; wherein both the
room are intolerably mauled, es
complimented with the l
[illegible] things equa
[illegible] ballad

time Sophia enjoys the pleasure of heartily plaguing both me and that person.

Perhaps I may pass the Christmas holydays at Paris. Adieu, dear sister. The new opera is execrable.

CXXXVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1725.

DEAR SISTER,

I AM extremely sorry for your indisposition, and did not wait for a letter to write to you, but my lord C * * *e has been going every day this five weeks, and I intended to charge him with a packet: nobody ever had such ineffectual charms as his lordship: beauty and money are equally ill bestowed, when a fool has the keeping of them; they are incapable of happiness, and every blessing turns useless in their hands. You advise a change of taste, which I confess I have no notion of; I may, with time, change my pursuit, for the same reason that I may feed upon butcher's meat when I am not able to purchase greater delicacies, but I am sure I shall never forget the flavour of *gibier*. In the mean time I divert myself passably enough, and take care to improve as much as possible that stock of vanity and credulity that Heaven in its mercy has furnished me with; being sensible that to those two qualities, simple as they appear, all the pleasures of life are owing. My sister Gower is in town, on the point of lying-in: I see every body, but con-

verse with nobody but *des âmes choisies*, in the first rank of these are lady Stafford and dear Molly Skerret, both of whom have now the additional merit of being old acquaintances, and never having given me any reason to complain of either of them. I pass some days with the duchess of Montagu,* who might be a reigning beauty if she pleased. I see the whole town every Sunday, and select a few that I retain to supper; in short, if life could be always what it is, I believe I have so much humility in my temper, that I could be contented without any thing better than this, two or three hundred years: but alas!

> Dulness, wrinkles, and disease, must come;
> And age, and death's irrevocable doom.

CXXXVII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 17[illegible]5.

I BELIEVE you have by this time received my letter from the hand of my lord Clare; however, I love you well enough to write again, in hopes you will answer my letters one time or other. All your acquaintances are run mad: they do such things! such monstrous and stupendous things! Lady Hervey and lady Bristol have quarrelled in such a polite manner, that they have given one another all the titles so liberally bestowed amongst the ladies

* Lady Mary Churchill, fourth and youngest daughter of *John* duke of Marlborough; she died in May, 1757.

at Billingsgate. Sophia and I have been quite reconciled, and are now quite broke, and I believe not likely to piece up again. Ned Thompson is as happy as the money and charms of Belle Dunch can make him, and a miserable dog for all that. Public places flourish more than ever: we have assemblies for every day in the week, besides court, operas, and masquerades; with youth and money, it is certainly possible to be very well diverted in spite of malice and ill-nature, though they are more and more powerful every day. For my part, as it is my established opinion that this globe of ours is no better than a Holland cheese, and the walkers about in it mites, I possess my mind in patience, let what will happen; and should feel tolerably easy, though a great rat came and eat half of it up. My sister Gower has got a sixth daughter * by the grace of God, and is as merry as if nothing had happened. My poor love Mr. Cook has fought and been disarmed by J. Stapleton on a national quarrel; in short, he was born to conquer nothing in England, that is certain, and has good luck neither with our ladies nor gentlemen. B. Noel is come out lady Milsington, to the encouragement and consolation of all the coquets about town; and they make haste to be as infamous as possible, in order to make their fortunes. I have this moment received from Mrs. Peling a very pretty cap for my girl; I give you many thanks for the trouble you have had in sending it, and desire you would be so good to send the other things when you have opportunity. I have

* Honourable Evelyn Leveson Gower, who married John Fitzpatrick, earl of Upper Ossory.

another favour to ask, that you would make my compliments to our English ambassador when you see him. I have a constancy in my nature that makes me always remember my old friends.

CXXXVIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, 1725.

I WROTE to you very lately, my dear sister; but ridiculous things happening, I cannot help (as far as in me lies) sharing all my pleasures with you. I own I enjoy vast delight in the folly of mankind; and, God be praised, that is an inexhaustible source of entertainment. I will mention to you some suspicions of my own in relation to lord B * * *t, which I really never mentioned to any one; but as there is never smoke without some fire, there is never fire without some smoke. These smothered flames, though admirably covered with whole heaps of politics, were at length seen, felt, heard, and understood; and the fair lady given to understand by her commanding officer, that if she showed under other colours, she must expect to have her pay retrenched. Upon this the good lord was dismissed, and has not attended in the drawing-room since. You know one cannot help laughing, when one sees him next, and I own I long for that pleasurable moment.

I am sorry for another of our acquaintance, whose follies (for it is impossible to avoid that word) are not of a kind to give mirth to those who

wish her well. The discreet and sober lady L * *re has lost such furious sums at the Bath, that it may be questioned, whether all the sweetness the waters can put into my lord's blood will induce him to forgive her, particularly 700*l.* at one sitting, which is aggravated by many astonishing circumstances. This is as odd to me as my lord T * * *m's shooting himself; and another demonstration of the latent fire that lies under cold countenances. We wild girls always make your prudent wives and mothers.

I hear some near relations of ours are at Paris, with whom I think you are not acquainted: I mean lord Denbigh and his Dutch lady,* who, I am very certain has somewhat of French in her composition. She is entertaining enough,

——extremely gay,
Loves music, company, and play—

I suppose you will see her.

CXXXIX.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1725.

I AM always pleased to hear from you, dear sister, when you tell me you are well. I believe that you will find, upon the whole, my opinion to be right, that air, exercise, and company, are the best medi-

* Isabella, daughter of Peter de Yong of Utrecht, in Holland, and sister of the marchioness of Blandford.

cines, and physic and retirement good for nothing but to break hearts and spoil constitutions.

I am very glad to hear you mention our meeting in London. We are much mistaken here as to our ideas of Paris—to hear that gallantry has forsaken it, sounds as extraordinary to me as a want of ice in Greenland. We have nothing but ugly faces in this country, but more lovers than ever. There are but three pretty men in England, and they are all in love with me, at this present writing. This will surprise you extremely; but if you were to see the reigning girls at present, I will assure you, there is little difference between them and old women.

I hear much of Mrs. Murray's despair on the death of poor Gibby, and I saw her dance at a ball where I was, two days before it happened. The duke of Kingston is in France, but is not to come to your capital. I am sorry to inform you of the death of our sister lady Gower's son of the small-pox. I think she has a great deal of reason to regret it, in consideration of the offer I made her two years together of taking the child to my house, where I would have inoculated him with the same care and safety that I did my own.

I know nobody who has hitherto repented the operation, though it has been very troublesome to some fools, who had rather be sick by the doctor's prescriptions, than in health, in rebellion to the college.

It is very true, that if I wrote to you a full account of all that passes, my letters would be both frequent and voluminous. This sinful town is very populous, and my own affairs very much in a hurry; but the same things that afforded me much matter

gave me very little time, and I am hardly at leisure to make observations, much less to write them down. But the melancholy catastrophe of poor lady L * * * is too extraordinary not to attract the attention of every body. After having played away her reputation and fortune, she has poisoned herself. This is the effect of prudence! All indiscreet people live and flourish. Mrs. M * * * has retrieved his grace; and being reconciled to the temporal, has renounced the spiritual; and her friend lady H * * *, by aiming too high, has fallen very low, and is reduced to trying to persuade folks she has an intrigue, and gets no one to believe her, the man in question taking a great deal of pains to rid himself of the scandal. Her Chelsea grace of R * * * has married her attorney. There's prudence for you!

CXL.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Twickenham, Jan. 1726.

DEAR SISTER,

HAVING a few momentary spirits, I take pen in hand, though it is impossible to have tenderness for you, without having the spleen upon reading your letter, which will, I hope, be received as a lawful excuse for the dullness of the following lines; and I plead (as I believe I have on different occasions), that I should please you better if I loved you less. My lord Carleton* has left this transitory world,

* Henry Boyle, fifth son of Richard earl of Orrery, was secretary of state to queen Anne, created baron Carleton 1714, and died 1725.

two days after, holding the fair duchess
hand, and being fed at the same time wit
fat chicken; thus dying as he had lived, ir
his pleasures. Lady Hervey * makes the tc
in town, and is so good as *to show* twice a
the drawing-room, and twice more at th
for the entertainment of the public. As for
having nothing to say, I say nothing. I ir
dwindle into a spectatress, and lead a kind
as it were. I wish you were here every da
see, in the mean time, lady Stafford and the
of Montagu and miss Skerret, and really
almost nobody else, though I walk abo
where. Adieu, dear sister; if my letters
any consolation to you, I should think my t
spent in writing them.

CXLI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF M—

I perceive never came to your hands: very provoking! it was certainly a *chef d'œuvre* of a letter, and worth any of the Savignés or Grignans, crammed with news. And I cannot find in my heart to say much in this, because I believe there is some fault in the direction: as soon as I hear you have received this, you shall have a full and true account of the affairs of this island—my own are in the utmost prosperity; add but eternity, you make it heaven.

I shall come to Paris this summer without fail, and endeavour to put you out of your melancholy.

CXLII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, London, 1726.

I AM very sorry for your ill health, but hope it is so entirely past, that you have by this time forgot it. I never was better in my life, nor ever past my hours more agreeably; I ride between London and Twickenham perpetually, and have little societies quite to my taste; and that is saying every thing. I leave the great world to girls that know no better, and do not think one bit the worse of myself for having out-lived a certain giddiness, which is sometimes excusable, but never pleasing. Depend upon it, it is only the spleen that gives you those ideas; you may have many delightful days to come, and there is nothing more silly than to be too wise to be happy.

If to be sad is to be wise,
I do most heartily despise
Whatever Socrates has said,
Or Tully writ, or Montaigne read.

So much for philosophy.—What do you say to Pelham's marriage? There's flame! there's constancy! If I could not employ my time better, I would write the history of their loves, in twelve tomes: lord Hervey should die in her arms like the poor king of Assyria: she should be sometimes carried off by the troops of Masques, and at other times blocked up in the strong castles of the Bagnio; but her honour should always remain inviolate by the strength of her own virtue, and the friendship of the enchantress Mrs. Murray, till her happy nuptials with her faithful Cyrus: it is a thousand pities I have not time for those vivacities. Here is a book come out,* that all our people of taste run mad about; it is no less than the united work of a dignified clergyman, an eminent physician, and the first poet of the age:† and very wonderful it is, God knows!—great eloquence have they employed to prove themselves beasts; and show such a veneration for horses, that since the Essex quaker, nobody has appeared so passionately devoted to that species; and to say truth, they talk of a stable with so much warmth and affection, I cannot help suspecting some very powerful motive at the bottom of it.

* Gulliver's Travels.
† Swift, Arbuthnot, and Pope.

CXLIII.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1727.

s a vile world, dear sister, and I can easily
hend, that whether one is at Paris or Lon-
ıe is stifled with a certain mixture of fool and
which most people are composed of. I would
atience with a parcel of polite rogues, or
ght honest fools; but father Adam shines
h his whole progeny. So much for our in-
then our outward is so liable to ugliness and
ers, that we are perpetually plagued with
our own decays and seeing those of other

Yet, sixpennyworth of common sense,
among a whole nation, would make our
ll away glibly enough; but then we make
nd we follow customs: by the first we cut
own pleasures, and by the second we are
able for the faults and extravagances of

All these things, and five hundred more,
e me (as I have the most profound venera-
the Author of nature) I am satisfied I have
ne of *the condemned* ever since I was born;
submission to the divine justice, I have
ıbt but I deserved it in some pre-existent
I will still hope that I am only in purgatory;
ıt after whining and pining a certain num-
years, I shall be translated to some more
sphere, where virtue will be natural, and
reasonable; that is, in short, where com-

mon sense will reign. I grow very devou
see, and place all my hopes in the next li
totally persuaded of the nothingness of t
not you remember how miserable we wer
little parlour at Thoresby? we then thou
rying would put us at once into possessi
we wanted. Then came * * * though, af
am still of opinion, that it is extremely sill
mit to ill fortune. One should pluck up
and live upon cordials when one can have
nourishment. These are my present enc
and I run about, though I have five thous
and needles in my heart. I try to consol
with a small damsel,* who is at present ev
I like—but, alas! she is yet in a white fr
fourteen she may run away with the l
there is one of the blessed effects of disappo
you are not only hurt by the thing presen
cuts off all future hopes, and makes your
pectations melancholy. *Quelle vie!!!*

CXLIV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-squa

I CANNOT deny, but that I was very well
on the coronation day.† I saw the processi
at my ease, in a house which I filled with
company, and then got into Westminster-h

* Her daughter, afterward countess of Bu
† The coronation of George II. Oct. 27, 1

out trouble, where it was very entertaining to observe the variety of airs that all meant the same thing. The business of every walker there was to conceal vanity and gain admiration. For these purposes some languished and others strutted; but a visible satisfaction was diffused over every countenance, as soon as the coronet was clapped on the head. But she that drew the greatest number of eyes, was indisputably lady Orkney. She exposed behind a mixture of fat and wrinkles; and before, a very considerable protuberance which preceded her. Add to this, the inimitable roll of her eyes, and her gray hairs, which by good fortune stood directly upright, and it is impossible to imagine a more delightful spectacle. She had embellished all this with considerable magnificence, which made her look as big again as usual; and I should have thought her one of the largest things of God's making if my lady St. J***n had not displayed all her charms in honour of the day. The poor duchess of M***se crept along with a dozen of black snakes playing round her face, and my lady P***nd (who is fallen away since her dismission from court) represented very finely an Egyptian mummy embroidered over with hieroglyphics. In general, I could not perceive but that the old were as well pleased as the young; and I, who dread growing wise more than any thing in the world, was overjoyed to find that one can never outlive one's vanity. I have never received the long letter you talk of, and am afraid that you have only fancied that you wrote it. Adieu, dear sister; I am affectionately yours.

CXLV.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1727.

My lady Stafford* set out towards France this morning, and has carried half the pleasures of my life along with her; I am more stupid than I can describe, and am as full of moral reflections as either Cambray or Pascal. I think of nothing but the nothingness of the good things of this world, the transitoriness of its joys, the pungency of its sorrows, and many discoveries that have been made these three thousand years, and committed to print, ever since the first presses. I advise you, as the best thing you can do that day, let it happen as it will, to visit lady Stafford: she has the goodness to carry with her a true-born Englishwoman, who is neither good nor bad, nor capable of being either; lady Phil Prat by name, of the Hamilton family, and who will be glad of your acquaintance, and you can never be sorry for hers.†

Peace or war, cross or pile, makes all the conversation; the town never was fuller, and, God be

* Claude Charlotte, daughter of Philibert count of Grammont (the hero of the celebrated Memoirs), and "La Belle Hamilton," eldest daughter of sir George Hamilton, bart. was married to Henry Stafford Howard, earl of Stafford, at St. Germain's-en-laye, 1694.

† Lady Philippa Hamilton, daughter of James earl of Abercorn, and wife of Dr. Pratt, dean of Downe.

praised, some people *brille* in it who *brilled* twenty years ago. My cousin Buller is of that number, who is just what she was in all respects when she inhabited Bond-street. The sprouts of this age are such green withered things, it is a great comfort to us grown-up people: I except my own daughter, who is to be the ornament of the ensuing court. I beg you would exact from lady Stafford a particular of her perfections, which would sound suspected from my hand; at the same time I must do justice to a little twig belonging to my sister Gower. Miss Jenny is like the duchess of Queensberry both in face and spirit. *A-propos* of family affairs: I had almost forgot our dear and amiable cousin lady Denbigh, who has blazed out all this winter; she has brought with her from Paris cart-loads of riband, surprising fashion, and of the last edition, which naturally attracts all the she and he fools in London; and accordingly, she is surrounded with a little court of both, and keeps a Sunday assembly, to show she has learned to play at cards on that day. Lady Frances* Fielding is really the prettiest woman in town, and has sense enough to make one's heart ache to see her surrounded with such as her relations are. The man in England that gives the greatest pleasure and the greatest pain, is a youth of royal blood, with all his grandmother's beauty, wit, and good qualities. In short, he is Nell Gwin in person, with the sex altered, and occasions such fracas amongst the ladies of gallantry that it passes description. You will stare to hear of her

* Afterward the countess of Winchilsea. Died 1734.

grace of Cleveland at the head of them.* If I was poetical, I would tell you—

The god of love, enraged to see
The nymph despise his flame,
At dice and cards misspend her nights,
And slight her nobler game;

For the neglect of offers past,
And pride in days of yore,
He kindles up a fire at last,
That burns her at threescore.

A polish'd wile is smoothly spread,
Where whilom wrinkles lay;
And, glowing with an artful red,
She ogles at the play.

Along the Mall she softly sails,
In white and silver dress'd;
Her neck exposed to eastern gales,
And jewels on her breast.

Her children banish'd, age forgot,
Lord Sidney is her care;
And, what is much a happier lot,
Has hopes to be her *heir*.

This is all true history, though it is doggrel rhyme: in good earnest she has turned lady Barbara† and family out of doors to make room for

* Anne, daughter of sir W. Pulteney, of Misterton, in the county of Stafford; remarried to Philip Southcote, esq. Died 1746.

† Lady Barbara Fitzroy, afterward countess of Darlington.

him, and there he lies like leaf-gold upon a pill; there never was so violent and so indiscreet a passion. Lady Stafford says nothing was ever like it since Phædra and Hippolytus—"Lord ha' mercy upon us! See what we may all come to!"

CXLVI.

TO THE COUNTESS OF MAR.

Cavendish-square, 1727.

I TAKE this occasion of writing to you, though I have received no answer to my last; but if my letters can give you either consolation or amusement, you need never want them. I have no good opinion of sorrow in general, and think no sort of it worth cherishing. You will wonder, perhaps, that lord Gower is become a great courtier, and that there is not one Tory left in England. There is something extremely risible in these affairs, but not so proper to be communicated by letter; and so I will, in a humble way, return to my domestics. I hear your daughter is a very fine young lady, and I wish you joy of it, as one of the greatest blessings of life. My girl gives me great prospect of satisfaction, but my young rogue of a son is the most ungovernable little rake that ever played truant. If I were inclined to lay worldly matters to heart, I could write a quire of complaints about it. You see no one is quite happy, though it is pretty much in my nature to console upon all occasions. I advise you to do the same, as the only remedy against the vexations of life; which, in my conscience, I think affords

disagreeable things to the highest ranks, and comforts to the very lowest; so that, upon the whole, things are more equally disposed among the sons of Adam, than they are generally thought to be. You see my philosophy is not so *lugubre* as yours. I am so far from avoiding company, that I seek it on all occasions; and, when I am no longer an actor upon this stage (by the way, I talk of twenty years hence at the soonest), as a spectator, I shall laugh at the farcical actions which may then be represented, nature being exceedingly bountiful in all ages in providing coxcombs, who are the greatest preservatives against the spleen that I ever could find out. I say all these things for your edification; which rules, if you execute with prudence, will disperse melancholy vapours, the sure foundation of all distempers.

I am your affectionate sister.

INDEX.

No.		Page
LXX.	To the Countess of Bute	3
LXXI.	To the Countess of Bute	9
LXXII.	To the Countess of Bute	12
LXXIII.	To the Countess of Bute	16
LXXIV.	To the Countess of Bute	18
LXXV.	To the Countess of Bute	20
LXXVI.	To the Countess of Bute	22
LXXVII.	To the Countess of Bute	26
LXXVIII.	To the Countess of Bute	29
LXXIX.	To the Countess of Bute	33
LXXX.	To Mr. Wortley	34
LXXXI.	To the Countess of Bute	36
LXXXII.	To the Countess of Bute	38
LXXXIII.	To the Countess of Bute	40
LXXXIV.	To the Countess of Bute	41
LXXXV.	To the Countess of Bute	45
LXXXVI.	To the Countess of Bute	48
LXXXVII.	To the Countess of Bute	50
LXXXVIII.	To Mr. Wortley	52
LXXXIX.	To the Countess of Bute	54
XC.	To the Countess of Bute	56
XCI.	To the Countess of Bute	58
XCII.	To the Countess of Bute	61
XCIII.	To the Countess of Bute	66
XCIV.	To the Countess of Bute	70
XCV.	To the Countess of Bute	72
XCVI.	Mr. W. Montagu to Lady M. W. Montagu	76
XCVII.	To the Countess of Bute	78
XCVIII.	To the Countess of Bute	80
XCIX.	To the Countess of Bute	82
C.	To the Countess of Bute	84

No.		*Page*
CI.	To the Countess of Bute	86
CII.	To the Countess of Bute	90
CIII.	To the Countess of Bute	91
CIV.	To the Countess of Bute	94
CV.	To the Countess of Bute	96
CVI.	To the Countess of Bute	97
CVII.	To the Countess of Bute	100
CVIII.	To the Countess of Bute	104
CIX.	To the Countess of Bute	107
CX.	To Mr. Wortley	109
CXI.	To the Countess of Bute	111
CXII.	To Mr. Wortley	112
CXIII.	To the Countess of Bute	114
CXIV.	To the Countess of Bute	116
CXV.	To the Countess of Bute	118
CXVI.	To the Countess of Bute	120
CXVII.	To the Countess of Bute	122
CXVIII.	To the Countess of Bute	124
CXIX.	To the Countess of Bute	125
CXX.	To the Countess of Mar	129
CXXI.	To the Countess of Mar	131
CXXII.	To the Countess of Mar	132
CXXIII.	To the Countess of Mar	134
CXXIV.	To the Countess of Mar	135
CXXV.	To the Countess of Mar	138
CXXVI.	To the Countess of Mar	139
CXXVII.	To the Countess of Mar	141
CXXVIII.	To the Countess of Mar	143
CXXIX.	To the Countess of Mar	146
CXXX.	To the Countess of Mar	147
CXXXI.	To the Countess of Mar	149
CXXXII.	To the Countess of Mar	151
CXXXIII.	To the Countess of Mar	153
CXXXIV.	To the Countess of Mar	155
CXXXV.	To the Countess of Mar	156
CXXXVI.	To the Countess of Mar	157
CXXXVII.	To the Countess of Mar	158
CXXXVIII.	To the Countess of Mar	160
CXXXIX.	To the Countess of Mar	161

No. *Page*

CXL. To the Countess of Mar 163
CXLI. To the Countess of Mar 164
CXLII. To the Countess of Mar 165
CXLIII. To the Countess of Mar 167
CXLIV. To the Countess of Mar 168
CXLV. To the Countess of Mar 170
CXLVI. To the Countess of Mar 173

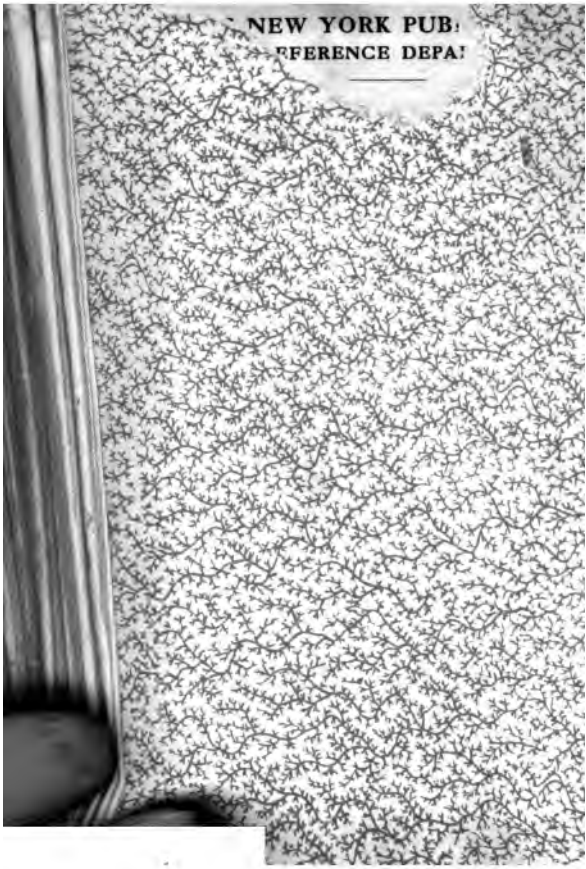
THE END.

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